

The Nation

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EDITORIAL

THE REAGAN FUTURE

The Vichy government changed the words on French coins from the revolutionary "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality" to a motto better suited to its repressive regime: "Work, Family, Fatherland." Does Marshal Pétain haunt the White House battlements, or do similar souls simply arrive at similar conclusions? President Reagan's State of the Union performance—it was hardly an address—and the budget his Administration promulgated the next day made the points appropriate to a system based on discipline, tradition and patriotism. The obfuscations of the budget should not be allowed to disguise the Administration's intentions: to dismantle the social support system, to privatize public enterprise, to delegitimize collective effort, to roll back the liberationist movements of the past two decades, at home and abroad, and to militarize the American future.

Reaganism is organized now around the Star Wars project, the biggest single item in the Pentagon's bag and the spiritual centerpiece of the President's big deal for the American people. Not only will it cost almost \$5 billion next year, \$90 billion by 1994 and more than \$1 trillion at the fictional point when it is declared finished, but it will recast every aspect of the national experience: the life of great cities and small communities, the value of housing and education, the prevalence of crime, the quality of health and the meaning of work. Star Wars and the ballooning military budget will turn the country away from social priorities to a greater extent than any effort since World War II.

The Administration hasn't got all it wanted in the past, but it has been depressingly successful even with a divided Congress. The new budget is a landmark on the way to the Reagan revolution, and if it's passed there's no telling what wasteland we will enter.

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WHEN HOPE GAVE WAY TO DESPAIR

MICHAEL B. SAVAGE

Port-au-Prince

On November 27 hundreds of desperately poor Haitians surged out of the squalid Raboteau slum and into the dusty streets of the coastal city of Gonaïves, one hundred miles north of the capital. Their cries of "Down with misery!" "Down with the dictatorship!" and "Vive l'armée!" touched off a crisis that could profoundly change Haiti.

The following day, students in Gonaïves joined the protest shouting a new slogan, "Down with Duvalier!" The security forces reacted the only way they knew how: three students were killed, two shot in cold blood and the third beaten to death. The killings sparked demonstrations in all the principal provincial cities and eventually in the capital.

By Latin American standards it was a small disturbance, hardly worth more than a brief item in the international press, but in Haiti it was seen as a signal of startling changes. Haitian and foreign observers began reassessing their stereotype of the Haitians as a docile people to whom politics is a game played in Port-au-Prince by power-hungry leaders. A new occupant in the gleaming white National Palace has never meant an improvement in the lot of Haiti's 6 million people, the most impoverished in this hemisphere. Yet within days of the Gonaïves protest, students were on strike throughout the country, and many poor Haitians agreed that President-for-life Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier, who has resided in that palace since he was 5, had to go. The popular explosion reached such proportions by January 31 that White House spokesman Larry Speakes announced that the Haitian

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LETTERS.

INTENSE COUNTERINSURGENCY

New York City

Michael T. Klare's article on low-intensity conflict (L.I.C.) focuses much-needed attention on what is becoming a critical U.S. policy ["The New U.S. Strategic Doctrine," Dec. 28/Jan. 4]. However, Klare fails to emphasize sufficiently two aspects of the doctrine that are central to its current implementation in Central America: (1) the use of economic and humanitarian aid as strategic weapons in a manner that goes well beyond the traditional military involvement in "civic action"; and (2) the use of private agencies to advance strategic goals.

In his book, *The Counterinsurgency Era*, Douglas Blaufarb, a former C.I.A. station chief and one of the leading proponents of the use of aid in the fight against communist expansionism, describes the strategic use of economic aid that has no economic payoff but rather is designed "to change attitudes, in order to build willing support for the government in a critical area." In this scenario, economic aid becomes a sophisticated psychological tool to build support for anticommunist regimes.

In a passage that could apply equally well to the Agency for International Development's current programs for displaced persons in El Salvador and Miskito Indian refugees in Honduras, Blaufarb describes A.I.D.'s program in Laos for the tribal guerrilla movement: "All of the work was done under the formal rubric of refugee emergency assistance and resettlement and rural development, in order to conform to AID categories of approved activity. In actual fact, it constituted the civilian front of an unconventional war which could not have been prosecuted without the aid program."

Not that this approach is always successful. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force John Michael Kelly laments, "With many honorable exceptions, the typical AID and USIA bureaucrat does not view himself as a soldier on the front line of one of the most critical battlefields of the 'Third World War.'"

The use of private agencies as part of L.I.C. strategy offers several advantages. It reflects the Reagan Administration's favorable attitude toward the private sector. It expands the sphere of activities and options open to the Administration. It provides greater legitimacy to counterinsurgency operations, assuming reputable private relief agencies can be convinced to participate in them. It provides a mechanism by which to bypass Congressional restrictions on special operations in the event that a national consensus on strategy does not emerge.

What is essential to understand about L.I.C. doctrine is that it involves not only the use of military force abroad but also the mobilization of economic, humanitarian and

psychological forces, both public and private, in the strategy of counterrevolution and counterinsurgency. Private agencies and providers of economic and humanitarian aid need to understand the United States's new political and military strategy in Central America if they are to avoid becoming accomplices in the pursuit of purely military goals.

Peter Shiras

KLARE REPLIES

Amherst, Mass.

Peter Shiras is entirely correct in emphasizing the role of private agencies in implementing the Reagan Administration's L.I.C. program in Central America. Let me note, however, that this was also the case during the Indochina war, and that I indicate clearly that much of what we see in El Salvador has been copied from the counterinsurgency experience in Vietnam.

Michael T. Klare

REAL HUMANITARIAN AID

Boston

"Tools for Peace" [Matthew Behrens, Jan. 11] described the Canadian citizens' campaign to help Nicaragua, and their growing dismay over U.S. policies in Central America. Not noted was the U.S.-based counterpart of Canada's T4P: the Oxfam America Tools for Peace and Justice Campaign, a grass-roots effort that dramatizes the contrast between Reagan Administration attitudes toward Nicaragua and the sentiments of many U.S. citizens.

Since 1984, Tools for Peace and Justice has collected nearly \$1 million in farm equipment, medical and educational supplies and cash donations for impoverished farmers in Nicaragua. The campaign is coordinated nationally by Oxfam America, the Boston-based international relief and development agency.

This is a real people-to-people effort. Donations have been collected by groups like the Christian Men's and Women's Fellowships of Little River, Kansas, and the Colorado Migrant Workers' Council. . . . Many of the campaign contributors are themselves farmers, motivated by a simple desire to help their counterparts to the south produce more corn and beans. . . .

In 1984, \$700,000 worth of tools was collected, mostly supplies for Nicaraguan home gardens and agricultural cooperatives. Just before the ship bearing this cargo was to embark, the Nicaraguan port of Corinto was mined by *contras* using U.S. aid. Fortunately, the mines were cleared in time for the ship to arrive safely at Corinto in August.

Last year the campaign was expanded to include other countries in Central America. A cross-country Tools for Peace and Justice Caravan collected donations in dozens of towns throughout the Farm Belt. Again, the

Reagan Administration's hostility to Nicaragua caused delay. The U.S. embargo on trade with Nicaragua was announced in May, and campaign organizers had to apply for a special license to send that part of the shipment destined for Nicaraguan peasants.

These political roadblocks to humanitarian aid have caused concern among campaign contributors. . . . But the donations have got through, and this year momentum is already building in the third Tools for Peace and Justice Campaign. Goods will not be collected; instead, participating groups will raise funds to purchase seed, fertilizer, shovels, work boots, looms and potter's wheels for rural communities.

Oxfam America will purchase the supplies and oversee their distribution in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and the eastern Caribbean. For information about activities in your area, write to the campaign staff at Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02130, or call (617) 482-1211.

Juan Vargas and Kathy McAfee
Oxfam America

GRATITUDE

South Bend, Ind.

Thank you for "The Moral Bypass" [symposium, Dec. 28/Jan. 4]. I enjoyed it more than any other article since I began reading *The Nation* several years ago. The perspectives of the six writers were all unique and challenging. The piece is a fascinating way to respond to *Habits of the Heart* and to our need for moral discussion. I appreciate the risk *The Nation* took.

Peter H. Schatz

EDITORIAL NOTE

The lead sentence of the editorial "The Test That Failed," on the cover of last week's issue, should have read, "That flash you saw on the television screen last Tuesday was a metaphor with many meanings: loss of innocence, heroic sacrifice, national failure."

CORRECTION

A word was accidentally dropped from Harold Meyerson's January 11 article, "Winds of Change in Big Labor." In reference to the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s decision to accept associate members, the sentence should have read: "However, some of the labor movement's most successful organizers have gently challenged the claim that enrolling workers who have never been represented by unions will predispose them to organize."

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EDITORIALS.

The Fix Is In

The fix is an American institution as sturdy and venerable as any mother, flag or fruit pie. Attempts to belittle the extent and effect of corruption, bribery and influence peddling in public life are betrayed by even a casual scan of the headlines. State and Federal judges in several locales are working their way through criminal justice or impeachment proceedings from the unfamiliar side of the bench. The former Mayor of San Diego is in the slammer. One of District of Columbia Mayor Marion Barry's closest appointees, a veteran civil rights worker, has pleaded guilty to embezzlement. Los Angeles

Republican Representative Bobbi Fiedler has been indicted for bribing a rival to withdraw from a race for higher office. In New York City's Borough of Queens, which may fairly be designated the national capital of corruption this winter, a State Supreme Court judge was sentenced to five years in jail for taking bribes to fix cases. The Borough President, Donald Manes, recently slit his wrist and ankle as a payoff scandal began to unfold around his office and his friends. Investigators are now probing dozens of dens of civic iniquity throughout the city, and Mayor Ed Koch is chopping heads as soon as they pop up in the papers.

The publicized cases barely suggest the magnitude of the problem. Myth makers like to pretend that corrupt practices in America are abnormal and readily repaired, that nothing

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here matches the widespread operation of *la mordida* in less civilized lands. But in many cities and counties—especially the older, rotting or otherwise decaying corners of this country—try to get a fair shake in a courtroom, a fair deal from a housing or fire inspector, or fair treatment from the constabulary without making a fix and you will find yourself far out in the cold.

On the other hand, privilege pays its own way, with a premium. Real estate czars, czarinas and czarevitches more or less run New York City. Certainly they make sure that public policy suits their private concerns. They buy into the political structure with big campaign contributions; they threaten to squeeze the market if they don't get their way; they throw lavish parties, bestow gifts, erect immovable monuments and generally infiltrate civic culture so thoroughly that they become institutionally indispensable. New York without Donald Trump is as unthinkable as Libya without Muammar el-Qaddafi or Dallas without J.R.

Corruption, like treason, never prospers. What's the reason? If it's successful, it's called leadership, clout, power. Corporate and institutional interests can keep to the letter of the law and still subvert local democracy by the judicious transfer of resources to public officials. But the consequences of major clout and minor corruption are the same in the way they profit the privileged and deceive the community.

Recent efforts to place legal obstacles between potential bribers and bribees have focused on political campaign contributions, but the caps suggested are hardly insurmountable. Banks, insurance companies, unions, condo converters, developers and merchants with a will to dominate local politics can easily figure out ways to make their presence—and presents—felt beyond the spending limits fixed by law. One may hope that certain mechanical measures will accomplish reform, but it is more likely that political struggles are necessary. Clout should be answered with clout. Corruption flourishes in a depoliticized atmosphere, where people assume they have no power to remove the evil around them, to kick out the bums, to fight City Hall. The organization of an opposition is the only logical way to neutralize entrenched power.

The task, then, is to construct movements of permanent reform strong enough to keep the engines of opposition running. It's hard but not impossible work. In hundreds of localities from Boston to Santa Monica, grass-roots politics has challenged power, exposed malfeasance and triumphed over corruption. No fix is too big to withstand a fair fight.

Back to Earth

“We don't want the quick answer, we want the right answer,” a weary NASA official said last week at Cape Canaveral after the American manned space program had blown itself to smithereens. His was a classic expression of engineering caution and common sense, of which apparently neither was in sufficient supply before the

space shuttle Challenger blasted off from pad 39B. A Presidential commission will seek to determine the mechanical cause of the mission's cataclysmic end, but in the meantime NASA and the nation must do some soul-searching about the costs and benefits of space travel.

The quick answer has already been heard from President Reagan and some members of Congress, who promised to get back on the horse and ride it around again. In the aftermath of a nightmarish shock to an American dream, any other response might have sounded indecorous. But finding the right answer means asking the right questions.

Was the shuttle program worn threadbare by political and economic pressures to succeed? From the beginning, in the early 1970s, the shuttle was compromised by design disputes, budgetary infighting and corporate competition. To win funding from Congress, NASA had to jump into bed with the Air Force, which demanded fundamental changes in the civilian agency's concept of a reusable spacecraft to accommodate military cargoes. To sell the program to the public, NASA committed itself to a frenetic pace of launchings in the 1980s, at one point proposing 714 flights between 1978 and 1990. And to placate the politically powerful Southern California aerospace industry, which was in the doldrums, NASA awarded the \$500 million contract for the shuttle's main rocket engine to Rockwell International, rather than to an East Coast competitor, Pratt and Whitney, which had more advanced designs.

Did NASA put public relations before public safety when it booked members of Congress and a schoolteacher on shuttle flights? To compete with the European Space Agency's Ariane satellite launcher, NASA had to make its shuttle missions look routine and dependable. In 1982 it declared that the system was operational after only four shakedown launches, even though crucial components of the spacecraft were still undergoing fundamental design changes. Clearly there was no scientific reason for taking civilians along. Only last year NASA's aerospace safety panel told the House Subcommittee on Space, Science and Applications, “NASA management would be well advised to avoid advertising the shuttle as ‘operational’ in the airline sense when it clearly isn't.” The idea of making temporary astronauts out of members of Congress who control NASA's budget, as well as artful communicators like teachers and journalists, was attractive to an agency strapped for funds.

What basic lessons do engineers still have to learn about assessing the risks of technology as complex as the shuttle's? From a technical perspective, perhaps the most disquieting aspect of the explosion of Challenger is that it apparently took NASA's engineers completely by surprise. In the words of William Graham, NASA's acting administrator, the rupture of one of the solid fuel boosters, which most likely caused the explosion, was not considered a “credible failure mode.” Engineers know they cannot build perfect machines, but they must have the ability to predict how machines could fail.

Like the nuclear power industry after the accident at Three Mile Island, the American space program will never be quite the same. There will be great pressure on NASA to

snap back to normal operations as soon as possible, but even the definition of normal will have changed. There is now no possibility whatsoever of the shuttle paying its own way. Just building a new orbiter to replace Challenger will cost around \$2 billion. Moreover, given the current management crisis within the agency—its head, James M. Beggs, is under indictment for defrauding the Army on a weapons contract before he began working at NASA—and the political tenuousness of its next big project, a manned space station, there is no firm footing on which to proceed with the dream. The quick answer may be to climb back in the saddle, but the right answer is to sit on the ground for a while and consider what caused the terrible fall.

Space Lessons

Christa McAuliffe disintegrated in space on January 28, six days before she was scheduled to broadcast a live TV lesson to the children of the United States. The lesson was to be titled "The Ultimate Field Trip." Her second lesson was to be "Where We've Been, Where We're Going, Why." It is worth speculating on how those lessons might be taught now.

LESSON 1: The Ultimate Field Trip

Christa McAuliffe took it.

Interviews with education authorities after the explosion of the Challenger indicated that there was great concern for the children who had witnessed the launch on television. The principal of McAuliffe's school and the assistant superintendent of the backup teacher-astronaut's school assured the press, and thereby the nation, that psychologists would be brought in to soften the children's sorrow and anxiety, as well as to convince them that sacrifices of this sort are noble and necessary for progress.

Why psychologists? And why necessary?

There is no way to soften the finality and absurdity of death. Every child growing up in a poor community knows people who have died young and understands the experience of never seeing someone again. More-protected children experience death more politely and indirectly, but they know that grief is appropriate and sorrow not to be softened. There is no need for a lesson or for a psychologist's advice. Children have to learn to live with death, just as they should learn to enjoy life.

The necessity of premature death is another matter. It is an occasion for a lesson, for a thoughtful examination of the causes and circumstances of wasted life. The death of Christa McAuliffe should be compared with that of junkies in New York and Detroit and with starving and tortured people throughout the world. Why hide the pain from the children? How else will they learn to act for decency if not by looking at the world, unprotected by psychologists and parents?

The lesson should be built on the notion of "investment" in human life. Questions like, Is one life more valuable than

another? should be discussed. Why does the nation grieve for one teacher in space and not mourn the 1,100 people who have been murdered in South Africa?

Young people are not given the opportunity to discuss those questions. It is said that we must protect them from the sad things in the world. But the corporate "we" isn't intended to protect all of our children. There was no talk of sending teams of psychologists to Watts or Harlem. The plea for protecting and helping the children that was chanted again and again on television and the radio in the days after Christa McAuliffe's death was no more than a mask for the more cynical attempt to convince children to believe our investment in space is worth a few human lives. That leads to the second untaught lesson.

LESSON 2: Where We've Been, Where We're Going, Why

These questions are legitimate for classroom exploration if the subject is space and science. But if the same questions are raised in the context of human issues, teachers are accused of mixing politics with education. Yet was Christa McAuliffe mixing politics with education? I don't believe she thought so. In a television interview she sounded like a wonderful, enthusiastic teacher who had just won a trip to Europe on a TV game show. She was wildly happy about her role as a citizen-astronaut, awed by the people she had an opportunity to meet and by the publicity she attracted. She believed that she would be helping young people throughout the country by her mission. It never occurred to her that she was being sent into space to glorify the teacher as heroine by an Administration that has done more to dismantle public education than any other in our history. Or that she was being used to sell the idea that space travel and defense are safe and necessary.

She did not know that what she would teach was that we are flirting with the fate of the planet while ignoring the simple human rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In other words, she was not prepared to deal with her second lesson.

Where we've been, where we're going and why are not issues teachers learn to think about or discuss with their students. For the most part teachers do what they are told to do, which is to pretend that everything is O.K. in this best of all possible countries in the world. If there are problems in the classroom, they are the fault of unruly students from bad backgrounds; if there are problems in our society, things are worse in other parts of the world, so we should feel proud.

Christa McAuliffe died pointlessly in a \$1.2 billion machine along with six other people. The greatest tribute teachers could pay to her and to the young people she served would be to explain her two lessons in an earthbound context. We will all take the same last field trip she took. And our children and grandchildren will have to understand where we've been, and decide where they're going and why.

HERBERT KOHL

Herbert Kohl, a teacher and writer, is the author, most recently, of Growing Minds (Harper & Row).

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

The No-Fault Presidency

The "news spasm," more frequent and more intense as the Reagan years progress, is becoming a frightening feature of the national political culture. Particularly memorable spasm events include the downing of K.A.L. 007, the destruction of the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut airport, the T.W.A. and the Achille Lauro hijackings and now the explosion of the space shuttle.

These news spasms are totalitarian in structure and intent, obsessively monopolistic of newsprint and the airwaves, forcing a "national mood" or consensus in which rituals of grief and vengeance can be carried forward, with President Reagan as master of ceremonies in electronic equivalents of a Nuremberg rally. The cries of grief, the howls for vengeance, all obscure the fact that President Reagan has almost invariably been to blame for the events provoking the spasms.

In the latest tumult over the loss of Christa McAuliffe and the others the quest for vengeance centers on some faulty piece of equipment, such as the solid fuel booster. But if the long-term blame can be traced back to Kennedy and NASA officials complicit in the utterly pointless manned space program, the short-term blame must certainly be laid to President Reagan. It was his idea to give space, the zone of Star Wars, a cozy, Rockwellish 1950s tinge by sending up a small-town American schoolmarm. And it was presumably the thought of President Reagan tilting his words up to McAuliffe in his State of the Union Message that prompted NASA officials to send up the Challenger even though they were well aware that the freezing temperatures were perilous in the extreme, particularly to the solid fuel boosters.

All such unpleasing questions were overwhelmed by the spasm, which, as usual, was evangelical in its fervor to establish a mood of national unity and unanimity. Words ("tragedy," "heroes") were voided of meaning. School-children, we were told, would need special "counseling" (that is, brainwashing). As a lad who survived the death of Buddy Holly without the need for emergency therapy, I say that children are tougher than that. A *New York Times* poll further implicated the nation's youth in the spasm, reporting that they still "favored" space exploration. These were the pollsters who told us right before Christmas that 87 percent of all children between the ages of 3 and 10 believe in Santa Claus.

The spasm, in short, deflects blame and, by the obsessive narrowness of its focus, reasserts priorities: this is a society that should mourn, to a point well past hysteria, Leon Klinghoffer but not Alex Odeh, Christa McAuliffe but not that true heroine Samantha Smith, U.S. Marines killed by Moslems but not Nicaraguan teachers killed by U.S.-backed *contras*.

Autres Schoolteachers, Autres Moeurs

On this matter of murdering Nicaraguan schoolteachers the Reagan Administration is warming up its campaign to kill more of them; that is, to win military funding for the

contras, on top of the "humanitarian" money feebly surrendered by Congress last year. It looks as though this campaign will climax sometime in late March.

The U.S. press is, needless to say, giving the Administration all the help it can, and in this war every foot of territory counts. When, on January 14, President Reagan attacked the Sandinistas for arming the Colombian M-19 guerrillas who stormed the Palace of Justice in Bogotá last November, most U.S. papers dutifully reported his words the next day. Almost no one, certainly not Bernard Weinraub in *The New York Times* for January 15, bothered also to report that on January 7 the Colombian Foreign Minister, Augusto Ramírez Ocampo, had said that Nicaragua's reply and rejection of the charges were "satisfactory" to the Colombians. *The Baltimore Sun* did carry Ocampo's statement under an appropriate headline. *The Boston Globe*, which had carried the initial accusations on its front page, put Nicaragua's exoneration on page 81, in its Sports section.

The press is being similarly cautious in following up on reports, as filed on December 20 by Robert Perry and Brian Barger of the Associated Press, that the *contras* are deeply involved in drug smuggling. If asked, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency will say that it has not investigated the accusations against the *contras* but will also stress that, contrary to the charges of Secretary of State Shultz and the head of the U.S. Customs Service, it has no evidence that Tomás Borge or other Nicaraguan leaders are implicated in drug smuggling.

The true weakness of the Administration's arguments was revealed by its release earlier this month of the long-awaited C.I.A.-State Department "rebuttal" of charges of *contra* atrocities, made initially by attorney Reed Brody. It is impossible to read the rebuttal without laughing. It says, with all apparent seriousness, that the charges were taken up with *contra* leaders in a day's conversation, at the end of which time the interrogators had satisfied themselves with the *contra* leaders' assertions that (a) they didn't abuse human rights; (b) if someone did, it wasn't them but other *contras*; (c) such *contras* had been punished; and (d) *contras* carry no bayonets or knives and therefore could not have inflicted many of the atrocities attributed to them. So much for all the photographs of *contras* carrying and using just such hardware.



There will be more of this kind of nonsense in the weeks to come, more distortions of what happened in the Contadora negotiations and so forth, but meanwhile a word of advice to those liberal folk still impelled to oppose the Administration on its policy toward Nicaragua. Do not, as some do, say that given the constraints of Gramm-Rudman the United States "cannot afford" to aid the *contras*; do not claim that by its policy in Central America the United States is "becoming isolated from its allies"; do not say that for the time being the United States is "overreacting"; do not say that U.S. policy is "driving the Sandinistas into the arms of the Soviet

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Union"; do not say there is "no consensus" in the United States over policy toward Nicaragua; do not say that a U.S. invasion would "cost too many U.S. lives and would not be certain of success." Recognize that if you are committed to nonintervention and Nicaraguan self-determination, this is argument enough, and no weasel words, no ferret phrases, are necessary.

Note to ferret fanciers: I know, I know. I kept a ferret once and caught rabbits with him exactly in the mode depicted on an Italian tapestry I once saw hanging in one of the New York museums. They're unattractive little beasts all the same.

They Stop at Nothing

Remember the "Spetsnaz"? They were popular with the U.S. disinformation industry before the Los Angeles Olympics, when it was still assured that the Soviet Union would attend. The usual swarm of "high intelligence sources" and "recent defectors" let it be known that the Soviet athletes would contain in their ranks highly trained saboteur-commandos, known as Spetsnaz, who would sneak out of the Olympic Village and busy themselves in the greater Los Angeles area with unspecified missions designed to promote the international Communist conspiracy.

The Russians never came to Los Angeles. The Spetsnaz were forgotten, until late January, when *Jane's Defence Weekly* announced that since 1983 the Russians have been training and deploying female Spetsnaz at Greenham Common, the U.S. cruise missile base in England. Their mission: mingle with the regular protesters and then sneak through the fence and plant sonar devices on the U.S. cruise missiles, thus allowing the Russians to trace them wherever they might be deployed.

The story, datelined Washington and under the byline of Yossef Bodansky, gave no sources for these amazing allegations, beyond the usual vague "defectors" and "intelligence sources." But *Jane's* let it be known that Bodansky was a defector and could not be interviewed, since he feared for his life. Eagerly credulous and encouraged by U.K. government contacts, the British media, most notably Independent Television News, ran the story.

Quite aside from many intrinsic absurdities—Bodansky claimed there were always between three and six Spetsnaz, all presumably with impeccable accents, at Greenham Common, even though overall attendance there had, by late last year, fallen as low as seven—British journalists in Washington trying to check the story soon ran into further difficulties. Bodansky had no security clearance at either the Pentagon or the State Department, was not an accredited journalist and, far from lurking in clandestine fear, was living openly with his Russian wife in suburban Baltimore. He himself has never defected from the Soviet Union and is an Israeli citizen. I would add that British journalists are more susceptible to drivel than their American colleagues, but given the popularity of the K.G.B. Pope plot and

"yellow rain," it is impossible to make this claim.

Footnote: I am grateful to Leigh Hauter, apiarist in Virginia, for sending me some specimens of yellow rain. As reviewed by trained *Nation* investigators (JoAnn Wypijewski and myself), these specimens consisted of fragments of yellow-spotted leaf. Hauter reports: "They were collected from the area round my house. It was a warm day, just as the fall nectar flow was ending. I have about thirty-five beehives. One of the weaker hives was being robbed by the others [!], and several hundred thousand bees were swarming around the area trying to get into it. The next day I noticed that everything was coated with drops of bright yellow."

I had intended to forward the fragments to Bob Bartley, editor of *The Wall Street Journal* and virtually the last surviving believer in yellow rain, but mistook them for crumbled bay leaf and threw them in a stew which I consumed with relish last Sunday.

The Way He Was

Henry Kissinger bobbed up to the top of the cistern again with his brief moot of a run against Mario Cuomo for Governor of New York State. To anyone feeling a momentary nostalgia for this frightful man, I commend *The Disappeared*, a fine new book by John Simpson and Jane Bennett about the murder of 11,000 people by the military junta in Argentina.

In June 1978, at precisely the moment that helicopters of the Argentine military were ferrying tortured prisoners out over the Atlantic and then dropping them to their death, Henry Kissinger arrived on a five-day visit to Buenos Aires as an official guest of the regime. The regime was being somewhat discomfited by fairly modest pressure exerted by the Carter Administration, notably by Patt Derian in the State Department's human rights office, to improve its record. Kissinger dispelled the junta's anxieties and stiffened its resolve. He assured the generals that Carter was a one-term President whose concern for human rights would vanish with him. At a meeting with Argentine officials, businessmen and journalists, all ardent supporters of the regime, Kissinger deprecated concern for human rights as against the need to combat terrorism, and told his cheering audience, "I would say that the United States owes you some understanding of the tragedies of your recent history." The torturers continued their work in good heart.

This is only one among many contributions to the suffering of humanity made by Dr. Kissinger, but there's no reason to forget it. Simpson and Bennett note, by the way, that another great friend of the Argentine junta, Jeane Kirkpatrick, was not being particularly original in her notorious contrasting of "authoritarian" with "totalitarian" rule. The "doctrine" can be traced at least as far back as 1949, when Francis Adams Truslow, chair of the New York Council on Foreign Relations, made a distinction between "autocratic" and "totalitarian" rule. He was attempting to justify U.S. support for Anastasio Somoza.

SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Whether by design or chance, the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party will open on February 25, the thirtieth anniversary of Nikita Khrushchev's historic anti-Stalin speech to the 20th Party Congress. Both events have special significance for the generation of officials headed by the 54-year-old Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. While the upcoming assembly will mark their rise to power in the Soviet system, the 1956 meeting was the formative event of their political youth. As a prominent journalist and party intellectual recently remarked, "We are the children of the 20th Congress."

Party congresses, like all Soviet political institutions, have changed greatly over the years. From 1917 to 1927, a national congress or conference was held every year and was almost always an occasion for heated factional debates and divided voting on major issues. Under Stalin, however, the gatherings were transformed into docile celebrations of official policy. As his power grew more despotic, they became less and less frequent; only two were held between 1939 and his death, in 1953. Since 1956, in accord with current party rules, congresses have been convened at least every five years. They are still largely orchestrated by the leadership, but because of Khrushchev's dramatic report on the morning of February 25, 1956, the 20th Party Congress was truly momentous.

Speaking for four hours to a closed session of 1,500 stunned delegates, Khrushchev dealt a devastating blow to the Stalin cult, which had been a secular religion for twenty years. With graphic accounts of torture and execution, he charged Stalin with personal responsibility for decades of "mass terror" and other calamities, including a series of military disasters during World War II. Khrushchev's "secret speech" was never published in the Soviet Union, but it was read at thousands of official meetings across the country and its general contents soon became widely known.

The speech had far-reaching political consequences. As the manifesto of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program, it legitimized the once-heretical idea of fundamental change in the Soviet system and in the Communist systems of Eastern Europe. Party reformers, who see its healthy ramifications even in the Prague Spring of 1968 and in Kadarism in Hungary today, still call it "one of the most important documents of our century." Inside the Soviet Union, as an unprecedented official admission of past crimes, it generated a torrent of critical thinking and protest from below, including the intellectual and cultural thaw of the 1950s and early 1960s and the dissident movement that came later.

The impact of the 20th Congress on Soviet citizens was traumatic and divisive. Many older people were implicated in the terror or were unshakable in their Stalinist faith. Some of them could not forgive Khrushchev, but others welcomed his revelations as a necessary act of "purification." The effect on Gorbachev's generation, young adults in their 20s, was especially profound. Told that the leader they had been

taught to worship as the "Father of the Peoples" was a genocidal tyrant, they too reacted in various ways. The young poet Feliks Chuyev spoke for some in proclaiming, "I never grow tired/ of the call: Put Stalin back/ on the pedestal!"

But a great many young people, bearing no responsibility for the past, experienced a "spiritual revolution." Throughout party and state establishments, they began their careers as anti-Stalinist reformers, rallying to Khrushchev's call for change and inspired by the aroused intelligentsia's credo, "Duty, honor and conscience." Their generational representatives, such as Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Andrei Voznesensky, were among the best and the most daring writers of the thaw.

Now that generation of officials is taking charge of the Soviet system. Unlike party congresses of the conservative Brezhnev era, where almost 90 percent of the Central Committee was reappointed, the February congress may see as many as half of the seats change. Most of them will go to men (and a few women) who came of political age in the 1950s. Of course, much has changed in thirty years. During Brezhnev's long reign, anti-Stalinism and reform were officially repudiated and the 20th Congress fell into disfavor. As is clear from the press and from private discussions in Moscow, many members of this generation have been corrupted by career success or hopelessly disillusioned. Some of the brightest are dead, in exile or broken.

But it also seems clear that many "children of the 20th Congress" are still on the scene, even in the party apparatus, and that Gorbachev's rise has rekindled the ideas and hopes of their youth. More than any other group, they are behind the outburst of bold reformist proposals and the flurry of anti-Stalinist themes in the mass media. Indeed, recent publications by Yevtushenko, who at 52 is still their political poet laureate, resound with powerful overtones of the thaw, like a bugle summoning his cohorts back into battle.

Can Gorbachev, who began his own career as a Young Communist League official in 1956, be entirely unaffected by what neo-Stalinists label the "poison" of the 20th Congress? As a Soviet leader, he is unique in several respects, but there are striking echoes of Khrushchev in his call for economic decentralization, his attacks on the state bureaucracies, his populist appeals to larger constituencies, his emphasis on the new and the young, and his effort to revive the nation's idealism.

No one in Moscow, it seems, expects anything so dramatic at the 27th Party Congress as happened thirty years ago. Even bold advocates of change stress the lesson of Khrushchev's overthrow: a reform leader must proceed cautiously. But they hope that Gorbachev will accelerate the new momentum for change by using his first congress to expand his criticism of the Brezhnev era. If so, middle-aged adults may recapture something from their youth, or, as Yevtushenko recently put it in a stirring poem in *Pravda*, "The years that have been sucked dry/ By the just-so-nothing-happens-ists."

CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

■ The Spy Boom

The press dubbed 1985 the Year of the Spy. In the more colorful prose of *The Washington Post* it was "the year that the murky, cloak-and-dagger world of espionage came blazing out of the shadows and onto the front page."

There is no question that the numbers of arrests and prosecutions for spying have risen dramatically during the Reagan years. Between 1966 and 1975, according to a Congressional Research Service study, there were no Federal espionage prosecutions. For the next five years, roughly corresponding to President Carter's term, thirteen persons were charged with spying. From 1981 to 1985, however, thirty-four individuals were arrested, twenty-five since 1983.

Does this mean there are more spies now than there were in the 1970s? Not necessarily. The number of spy cases made public is not an accurate index. Sometimes the government rules out a prosecution to protect sensitive information. Other times a spy is turned into a double or even a triple agent, or is allowed to continue for the purpose of feeding false information. In his memoirs Carter's Attorney General, Griffin Bell, reveals that in 1978 the Justice Department decided to prosecute alleged spies rather than continue the policy of using them for intelligence purposes.

The Reagan Administration followed the Carter policy, with a vengeance. The high numbers and attendant publicity last year suggest that the Administration was at least as interested in scoring cold war political points as in catching spies, a suspicion that is borne out by a little-noticed report produced for the Senate. Last April the Committee on Governmental Affairs held four days of hearings on Federal security clearance procedures. As part of that exercise it asked the Defense Intelligence Agency for a list of all significant cases of espionage that, since 1945, had resulted in the real or intended compromise of Pentagon secrets. The D.I.A. submitted details on fifty-seven individuals, most of whose arrests attracted little attention at the time.

The Reagan Administration's underlying political motive is especially evident in its selection of targets. Last year the Justice Department invoked the Espionage Act in prosecuting Samuel Morison, a civilian naval analyst who gave photographs of a Soviet aircraft carrier to the press. The act was intended for use against spies, not your average Washington leaker. Also, in an extraordinary assertion of jurisdiction, the government prosecuted Michael Sous-soudis, a Ghanaian citizen, for espionage that took place outside the United States. The recent spate of spy prosecutions should be seen for what it is: part of the Administration's strategy to whip up public fears and support for its 1950s-style cold war foreign policy.

■ The Aid Game

Five years ago Honduras was a sleepy backwater of U.S. foreign policy, as befitted the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. What a difference a few hundred million dollars make. The country's pivotal role as a site for U.S. military maneuvers and as a support base for *contra*

raids into Nicaragua has turned on the economic and military aid faucets; U.S. aid now makes up roughly 10 percent of Honduras's gross national product. Unaccustomed to such largesse, the Hondurans took awhile to catch on to the aid game, but lately they've been showing a talent for it.

In October, the Agency for International Development announced it would withhold \$67.5 million that was promised to Honduras last March. In return for the money President Roberto Suazo Cordova had pledged to institute a package of economic "reforms," the most distasteful of which, as far as the Hondurans are concerned, would lead to the devaluation of the lempira. Devaluation—which is being touted by the U.S. Treasury Department, the Office of Management and Budget and A.I.D., with a reluctant State Department and Pentagon bringing up the rear—is intended to boost exports. But the elite who run Honduras say they have little to gain from the kind of agricultural export-led growth A.I.D. envisions. Many Honduran political leaders have investments in banking and would be hurt by a currency devaluation. Government leaders also contend that devaluation would cause social unrest and kindle fears of inflation among the public.

Suazo's reluctance to comply with A.I.D.'s master plan was linked, in part, to his furious but futile attempt to extend his term by changing the electoral law. He got absolutely no support from the U.S. Embassy for his machinations, and his relations with the new U.S. Ambassador, John Ferch, reached such a low point that State Department officials hinted that the aid was also being withheld to prevent Suazo from using the money to bribe legislators.

But when Congress approved \$27 million in "humanitarian" aid to the *contras* last summer, Suazo saw he had been dealt an ace. He could take advantage of his country's key role in the Reagan Administration's plan to destabilize the Sandinista government by clamping down on the *contras*. His task was made easier by an NBC crew that filmed the unloading of the first shipment of the aid last October, and by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, who made some indiscreet remarks about Honduras's aid to the *contras*. Both incidents caused a furor, particularly in the military. Suazo then barred almost \$13 million worth of *contra*-bound equipment from entering his country.

The Reagan Administration was so pleased to see Suazo's term end that it sent Vice President George Bush to the inauguration of José Azcona Hoyo in January. Although Azcona is the first civilian President elected in Honduras to succeed another civilian in more than fifty years, the United States is interested mainly in whether he will lift the ban on the *contra* shipments, which are now languishing in warehouses. The betting is that he will, but only after A.I.D. relents on the reforms or supplies more aid to soften a devaluation. Last week A.I.D. released \$35 million of the promised funds. Given the primacy of the U.S. interest in the *contras* as opposed to Honduras's well-being, the Hondurans wager that eventually U.S. policy will follow the line the Pentagon suggests: "Just give them the damn money."

ARTICLES.

WORKERS OR DICTATORS

Which Side Are You On, AAFLI?

TIM SHORROCK AND KATHY SELVAGGIO

At its national convention last October the A.F.L.-C.I.O. held the first public debate on U.S. foreign policy in its history. At issue were the federation's position on the U.S. role in El Salvador, Nicaragua and other Third World countries, and the efficacy of its agencies, such as the American Institute for Free Labor Development, in assisting "free trade unions" abroad. From the convention floor unionists raised a broad-based and unprecedented challenge to the federation leadership, charging that it was following the Reagan Administration's foreign policy goals at the expense of workers here and overseas [see Harold Meyerson, "Winds of Change in Big Labor," *The Nation*, January 11].

One foreign program that is receiving greater scrutiny by the press and by some union members is that of the Asian American Free Labor Institute, which operates in eighteen countries. AAFLI was set up in 1968 to "provide urgently needed technical assistance" and "promote the growth of free and effective trade unions" in Asia and the Middle East. Like its sister institutes working in Latin America and Africa, AAFLI has historically received most of its funding from the Agency for International Development, an arm of the State Department. In virtually every country in which it has established programs AAFLI's agenda parallels that of its benefactor.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Philippines and South Korea, strategic U.S. allies that have a legacy of dictatorship and labor repression. In both countries, AAFLI representatives—all of whom seem to hold a fiercely anti-communist ideology—support pro-government union federations and refuse to work with independent unions, particularly those with ties to opposition political groups.

In the Philippines, intensifying political instability following the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino sounded alarms in Congress and the Reagan Administration. Washington worried about the Marcos government's loss of credibility, the fast-growing communist insurgency and popular demands for the removal of U.S. bases. True to form, AAFLI responded with a program designed to stem the growth of a politicized, left-leaning labor movement. A multimillion-dollar boost from Congress has allowed the labor institute to expand its mission and fight "communist

forces." It also helped push the unions to support the U.S. call for "free and fair elections."

Over the past five years the militant workers' movement in the Philippines has been growing rapidly, fueled by unemployment and underemployment, which affects nearly half the working population; poverty, which, according to government estimates, plagues 70 percent of the people; and slumping demand for sugar, a major export, which has left 400,000 sugar workers facing starvation on the island of Negros. Progressive labor groups have allied themselves with the Kilusang Mayo Uno, or May First Movement (K.M.U.), a 500,000-member federation founded five years ago by unions and labor leaders who were disenchanted with the established, pro-government labor movement. Rallying under the banner of "genuine and independent unionism," the K.M.U. organizes workers around nationalist political demands, such as the removal of U.S. bases, as well as economic issues. It is credited with spearheading the short-term general strikes, called people's strikes, that occur regularly in major cities around the Philippines, and is a major participant in the grass-roots opposition movement.

The K.M.U. presents a formidable challenge to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (T.U.C.P.), which was organized by the government in the 1970s and operates on the principle of tripartite cooperation among labor, management and government. Critics charge that labor is an unequal partner in the arrangement and that the T.U.C.P. has been co-opted by the government. The federation rarely challenges antilabor laws and has even defended mass arrests of workers. Its ranks have dwindled from 2 million when it was formed to 1.2 million workers today.

But if the federation is losing members, it isn't losing money. All of the funds AAFLI sends to the Philippines are channeled through it or its affiliates. The apparent contradiction between AAFLI's ostensible dedication to free trade unionism and its willingness to work with unions that are subservient to the Marcos government seems to embarrass its officials. In an interview last spring, AAFLI's Philippines director Don Phillips expressed uneasiness about the federation's posture. "We don't always agree with the notion of tripartite cooperation," he said. "The T.U.C.P. needs to be more dynamic and independent in order to make free decisions." But despite those reservations, Phillips—who previously served in the Philippines with the U.S. Marines and as a Protestant missionary—directs much of his energy to fighting the K.M.U. In the course of a recent interview with us, he referred to the K.M.U. as "the communists," insisted that K.M.U. unions were controlled by outside forces and suggested that the group "coerced" employers by negotiating collective bargaining agreements "with a gun on the table." He was vague when pressed for details.

AAFLI's ideological mission in the Philippines was recently bolstered by a hefty grant from the National Endowment for Democracy, a foundation set up by Congress to "strengthen democratic institutions" abroad. The

Tim Shorrock is a writer and labor consultant who has frequently visited South Korea, most recently last June. Kathy Selvaggio is a freelance writer who visited the Philippines last spring. They both live in Washington.

bulk of the endowment's annual budget—\$18 million this year—goes to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. for its foreign programs.

According to a confidential document obtained by a Congressional staff member, the endowment budgeted \$3.2 million for AAFLI programs in the Philippines through April 1985. That was by far the largest allotment to any foreign country that year. When A.I.D. funds are added in, the institute's total 1985 budget for the Philippines comes to as much as \$4 million, though its Washington office insists the program received \$1.4 million.

In an interview with the *San Francisco Examiner* last July, Phillips admitted that the endowment funds help T.U.C.P. unions and gain political allies for AAFLI. Regional labor leaders receiving institute money "are becoming powerful politically," he boasted. "Imagine if you have \$100,000 to give out to families in \$500 chunks. Your stock goes way up, faster than the stock of any of the militant labor groups." This injection of funds has also enabled AAFLI to expand its programs beyond the urban-based labor movement, to the countryside, where support for the insurgents is widespread. And the Philippine press reported that the T.U.C.P. loudly echoed the U.S. call for free elections. It also reported that the federation has been charged with funneling foreign money to a U.S.-promoted poll-watching organization, the National Movement for Free Elections.

Although AAFLI appears to be open about how it uses endowment money, details about the location and scope of its projects are kept secret by mutual agreement among the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the endowment and a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee. An April 15, 1985, internal memorandum from the A.F.L.-C.I.O. to the National Endowment for Democracy lists the Philippines among the countries that might be "endangered or embarrassed" if specific budgets were announced. (The endowment records were exempt from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act until this year.)

One incident illustrates how sensitive the Philippines project is to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Last year, AAFLI's enormous spending aroused the suspicion of the labor attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Joseph Lee, who inquired about the destination of the funds. Sources in Washington say that Irving Brown, director of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s Department of International Affairs, complained to the State Department, which quietly removed Lee from his post in September.

Caught off guard by the broad challenge to its policies in Latin America, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership was determined to head off a similar move on the Philippines at its October convention. It made a concerted attempt to salvage the T.U.C.P.'s damaged credibility by devoting discussion sessions to the threat of the K.M.U. and the specter of communism in the Philippines and by awarding T.U.C.P. general secretary Ernesto Herrera the George Meany Human Rights Award. But as the movement for democracy and self-determination grows in the Philippines, the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s backing for the official labor group is steadily losing support among American rank-and-file unionists. Last fall, a delegation of K.M.U. representatives

toured the United States, meeting with dozens of state and national union leaders. The delegates also addressed several local federations, among them the San Francisco Labor Council, which are normally reticent about taking actions not sanctioned by the federation. With Central America provoking anti-interventionist sentiments among unionists, the federation may prove incapable of containing the growing opposition to its programs in the Philippines.

South Korea is one of the most industrialized countries of the Third World and a major exporter of ships, steel, automobiles and electronic products. Thus, it presents AAFLI with a task somewhat different from that undertaken in the largely rural Philippines. Since opening an office in 1972, AAFLI has been affiliated with the government-sanctioned Federation of Korean Trade Unions (F.K.T.U.). AAFLI provides unions with its standard fare of financial assistance for labor education, cooperatives, credit unions, health-care programs and language training. It also funds a labor counseling center at a large industrial complex near Seoul and occasionally finances visits by South Korean unionists to the United States.

In a country where, in the words of a former U.S. labor attaché to Seoul, the government "treats workers like we used to treat the blacks," AAFLI's style of trade unionism has become more and more irrelevant. Following a surge of strikes and labor unrest in 1979 and 1980, the military government of President Chun Doo Hwan dismantled the federation of industrial unions, banned regional labor organizations and outlawed all "third parties," including national union officials and church activists, from assisting local unions. More than 400 trade unionists were fired from their jobs or arrested, and total union membership dropped from



more than 1.2 million in 1979 to 700,000 in 1981.

In the past two years, however, a dynamic labor movement has re-emerged and again met stiff repression. Workers have organized more than 150 unions; they have taken to the streets and engaged in illegal strikes to demand political reforms and better conditions and wages. Employers have reacted to the labor upsurge by mobilizing gangs to attack strikers, firing union sympathizers, forming company unions and simply refusing to engage in collective bargaining. The government has thrown its weight behind those measures. Last year it made mass arrests of workers, including several hundred who participated in a series of strikes in June in sympathy with workers from the Daewoo Apparel Company, the first such walkouts in forty years. In August, four top officials of the F.K.T.U. were forced to resign for supporting the strikes.

But amid some of the harshest repression ever seen in South Korea, AAFLI is determined to keep the labor movement out of politics altogether. "I think the movement here should just stick to the straight and narrow economic issues," an AAFLI country representative in Seoul said last June. "As we've seen in El Salvador, it's possible for independent unions to develop in an authoritarian setting." Toward that end, AAFLI has tried to build "labor unity" by arranging clandestine meetings between leaders of isolated company unions in the same industry and by establishing close ties with individual unions. "The F.K.T.U. gets annoyed when we do that," confided one AAFLI official.

AAFLI's version of solidarity does not extend to the hundreds of unionists who have lost their jobs because of government and company harassment, however—a lesson that one group of Korean workers learned the hard way. In January 1981 Morris Paladino, then the executive director of AAFLI in Washington, arrived in Seoul shortly after the city government had outlawed the Chonggye Garment Workers Union, one of the strongest locals in the country and a major recipient of institute funds. When Paladino refused to attend a meeting the union had called to discuss the situation with him, twenty-five angry and desperate union members occupied the AAFLI offices and took George Curtin, the institute's country representative, hostage. The building was quickly surrounded by some 500 riot police, who arrested and beat the occupiers. Several protesters, including Lee So Sun, a celebrated organizer known as the "mother of the workers," served time in jail.

In an interview shortly before his retirement last year, Paladino said he did not attend the meeting because the workers. In 1983, country director George Curtin was visiting Washington at the time. He attributed the violence inflicted on the workers to "different ethnic standards." "There's just certain things that the Koreans do," he explained.

AAFLI still considers the Chonggye union off-limits because of its close ties with the democratic opposition. Moreover, it is AAFLI policy not to work with, or even to meet, anyone connected with the dissident labor movement. Although there is no identifiable left in South Korea, labor militants are routinely fired for being "outside agitators"

and "political activists who want to overthrow the government." As an AAFLI staff member said of the workers from fifteen banned unions who formed the Workers Welfare Association, one of the unofficial labor groups active in the recent upsurge: "They're cadre. . . . From the workers' point of view, they have to prove their sincerity as trade unionists. I think it's fair to debate what their motives are." This line of thinking fits neatly with the Chun government's accusations that workers are being "manipulated" by college-educated radicals, charges that led to scores of arrests last year.

But AAFLI's narrow definition of a "genuine trade unionist" is not universally accepted by South Korean workers. In 1983, country director George Curtin described the union leadership at the Daewoo Motor Company (a joint venture with General Motors) as "the kind of guys we like to work with." According to union members interviewed last spring, these "guys" received lavish salaries, traveled frequently in helicopters, had close contact with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and never brought a collective bargaining agreement to a vote. But all that changed last April, when 2,000 of the rank and file defied the union leadership, called a strike and won a major wage hike. Although the dissidents who led the walkout are in prison, the union leaders—so strongly backed by AAFLI—are now in disgrace among the rank and file.

The recent wave of labor repression in South Korea has led to strong criticism of the Chun government by some American unionists. The United Automobile Workers, worried that a wave of cheaply made Korean cars in the American market could further undercut American jobs, has sharply attacked South Korea's labor policies and, in retaliation, is fighting to remove its duty-free privileges in the U.S. market. At the October convention, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. adopted a resolution denouncing "the recently renewed campaign of repression [in South Korea] . . . which seems intent on breaking or intimidating existing unions, stifling union activists, and undermining the integrity and independence of the F.K.T.U." Those U.S. actions appear to have the approval of AAFLI's current South Korea representative, Philip Fishman, who says he regularly supplies the federation with information on developments in the country. But whether this represents a shift from AAFLI's conservative stance or a reaction to pressure from A.F.L.-C.I.O. member unions remains to be seen.

The overriding issue is whether AAFLI serves the interests of workers and trade unionists. In both the Philippines and South Korea there is strong evidence that under the cover of building free trade unions, the institute supports only those unions and labor organizations that do not challenge the status quo. In this way it serves the interests of U.S. foreign policy—and its guiding lights, the multinational corporations. Since 1980, U.S. corporations have directly invested more than \$200 million in the Korean automobile, electronics and computer industries. With billions of dollars in loans from U.S. banks, these ventures are rapidly expanding their exports to the United States. In the Philippines, the

labor movement that AAFLI is fighting opposes not only the presence of U.S. military bases but also the dominance of U.S.-based multinationals, which have long exploited the country's cheap labor and rich natural resources. The number of U.S. jobs that have been lost as a result of labor repression in these countries is impossible to quantify, but it is surely substantial. By limiting its aid to unions friendly to American interests and maintaining a silence about the serious deterioration of labor rights in these countries, AAFLI is contributing to the repression and helping to speed the process of capital flight from the United States to the Third World.

This and the fact that organized labor's erstwhile enemies, such as Senator Orrin Hatch, are now praising the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s foreign programs and pushing Congress to increase their funding are more than enough to raise serious questions about the aims of AAFLI. Ironically, the Asian American Free Labor Institute may be damaging the interests of both Asian and American workers. □

THE INSURANCE CRUNCH

The Manufacturing Of a Crisis

NANCY NICHOLS

A small bus company's annual insurance rate goes from \$50,000 to almost \$200,000, an increase of close to 400 percent, for less than half its previous coverage. The owner of a small resort is told on the day his policy expires that it will not be renewed. He calls twelve insurance agents and six state offices before finding coverage one month later, at three times the cost of his original policy. A woman who runs a small day-care center in her home decides to go "bare." She continues to take in children, even though she has not been able to find insurance to cover them or herself in case of accidents.

There is a growing crisis in the insurance industry. Companies, municipalities and some professionals are having trouble finding liability insurance; when they do find it, it is expensive. Premiums have risen as much as 1,000 percent in some cases. Insurance executives cite the skyrocketing jury awards and other legal costs in liability cases as the reason for the rising rates and the shortage of coverage. Reporters and editorialists echo the industry's complaints. In reality, insurance companies are overstating their losses to fatten their earnings and to encourage reform of liability laws. "What we are witnessing is a manufactured crisis intended to bloat insurer profits," said Bob Hunter of the National Insurance Consumer Organization.

The problem began five years ago, when interest rates were high and premiums could be invested profitably. A

Nancy Nichols is a reporter for The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour.

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price war ensued, as companies cut rates in an effort to attract capital to invest. "Good, sound, traditional underwriting practices in properly pricing a particular risk were cast to the wind in order to capture market share," recalled Edward J. Muhl, Insurance Commissioner for the state of Maryland. For example, in its rush to get cash, an insurance consortium underwrote the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas within a year of a devastating fire that had occurred there. When interest rates eventually dropped, investments that had been earning up to 20 percent were drawing as little as 7 percent, and the insurance industry had to retrieve its income through underwriting. The consumer was forced to pay for the industry's poor management and the bad risks it had underwritten.

Companies began canceling policies and raising their rates. Some businesses, such as fishing, shipping, day-care centers, skating rinks and bus companies, are having increasing difficulty obtaining coverage. Industry representatives claim that recent cases of child abuse at day-care centers have made insuring them too risky, even though there have been few such incidents. Sandy Skolnik of the Maryland Committee for Children thinks that if rates continue to climb, "there might not be very much day care in a year." For some social service agencies, she says, lack of insurance has been more devastating than Reagan's budget cuts.

The industry justified the rate increases to state regulators by citing a combined pretax loss of \$3.8 billion in 1984, supposedly caused by heavy underwriting losses. That figure was picked up by the media, which ran stories about insurance companies swimming in red ink.

Yet the insurance industry did not lose money that year. Because companies have huge tax credits from previous

years and because they earn dividends from their investments, the industry's profits in 1984 totaled \$200 million, according to a study by the General Accounting Office. The G.A.O.'s Natwar Gandhi explained that insurance companies could have a large amount of working capital and still "show huge losses for tax purposes." He found that between 1975 and 1984 the companies paid out nearly \$47 billion in underwriting losses and made \$119 billion on their investments, for a net gain of \$72 billion.

What's more, all that income was tax free because of a law that allows the companies to set aside money as a hedge against future losses. Although the money may not be paid out for ten years or more, for all those years the companies are allowed to write off the principal, though not the profits from its investment. Such tax advantages are part of the reason insurance stock prices increased in the first nine months of 1985 at twice the rate of the Standard & Poor's index and the Dow Jones industrial average, according to the A.M. Best Company, a financial consulting firm that studies the industry.

To stop the insurance industry in New Jersey from raising premiums and from crippling businesses by refusing coverage, State Insurance Commissioner Hazel Gluck issued a restraining order. "We should not permit the industry to abuse its policyholders as it implements new strategies to address its past mismanagement practices," stated Gluck. "In many cases insurance companies have exceeded the boundaries of reasonableness in the conduct of their business, and these activities must cease." Her order bars insurance companies from increasing rates or canceling policies in midterm and withdrawing from industries without the prior consent of her office. She is being sued by the American Insurance Association and other trade groups.

In other states, however, the industry continues to raise rates and push for the easing of liability laws. *The New York Times* recently reported that more than 13 million civil lawsuits were filed in Federal and state courts last year. In the past ten years, according to statistics compiled by the administrative office of the Federal courts, the number of insurance-related Federal civil lawsuits has doubled.

While the number of suits has been increasing, so has the size of jury awards. A Rand Corporation study found that the number of million-dollar judgments in Cook County, Illinois, and San Francisco County increased by nearly 500 percent between 1960 and 1980, although they still accounted for only 2 percent of all jury awards in those counties. Even though many large judgments are reduced on appeal, the companies believe that the publicity they generate encourages others to sue. They want the states to set a limit on the amount of money a jury can award a victim. Pennsylvania has already curbed the amount of "pain and suffering" awards granted to people who sue cities. New York State is considering similar action.

Bob Hunter at the National Insurance Consumer Organization is not convinced by the insurance companies' arguments. He told a House Small Business subcommittee: "I believe we are witnessing joint action by insurers intended to create an atmosphere where rates can be



put too high and legislators will be intimidated into action designed to take away victims' rights and to allow wrongdoers to go unpunished. . . . The crisis is within the insurance industry, not in the courts." To support his view, Hunter cited the assertion of an insurance company executive, quoted in the *Journal of Commerce*, that the insurance industry should stop covering doctors, chemical manufacturers and corporate officers. "It will be the best for the social good to let society know that the problem is not one for the insurance industry but for society as a whole," the executive had said. "It is right for the industry to withdraw and let the pressures for reform build in the courts and in the state legislatures."

The industry is also pushing for a new standard commercial liability policy that lessens insurers' risks. Under this plan, the first major change in twenty years, a company's liability would be limited to claims made during the period in which the policy is in force. It would allow insurers to escape responsibility for injuries that are caused but not detected during that period. Businesses that changed insurance companies would not be protected against future claims based on past conduct. As a result, victims would assume the risks associated with asbestos and other health hazards, which may not result in illness until many years after an employee's initial exposure. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, twenty-seven states will allow the use of a "claims made" form starting next year. The insurance companies believe the form will make their risks more predictable. If they can better assess the risks, they claim, premiums will more accurately reflect costs, and crunches like the present one will become less likely. But as Hunter pointed out, "There's predictability for the companies, but much less predictability for the consumer."

Hunter and others also charge that the insurance industry may be breaking the law by acting in concert to lock some professions and businesses out of the insurance market. "Insurance companies are not bound by antitrust laws," said one frazzled businessman searching for coverage. "They can set markets, can set prices, and they're doing both."

In 1945, Congress passed the McCarran-Ferguson Act, which exempts insurance companies from Federal antitrust laws. However, according to Ron Landsman, a Washington attorney, "boycotts to force action by state and Federal officials, be they judges, legislators or regulators, are illegal." He fears that actions by the insurance companies "may be a prelude to a larger campaign to force major industries, from the chemical and drug manufacturers to physicians and others, to bend to the interests and will of insurers." Although the *National Journal* recently reported that the Federal Trade Commission is investigating certain lines of insurance, the commission will neither confirm nor deny it.

As the crunch continues, there will be increased popular pressure on regulators to control the industry. Insurance has always been regulated by the states, but the quality of the oversight varies and state regulators have only limited power. "If we don't give them 'claims made,' if we don't give them caps, if we don't give them all these things, they

won't write," one insurance commissioner explained.

On the national level the House and Senate commerce committees are holding hearings, and state legislatures across the country are addressing the problem. But until a solution is devised, states would be wise to follow New Jersey's example and give the consumer some breathing room. It may be necessary for insurance commissioners to freeze rates and limit withdrawal while they study the problem. Otherwise we may witness the final gasp of small businesses, professions like midwifery, and social services for children and for the homeless. □

■ THE U.M.W. STRIKE

A Victory for Miners' Rights

NICOLAUS MILLS

Five days before Christmas, the United Mine Workers ended the longest strike in its history, a fifteen-month battle with the A.T. Massey Coal Company, the nation's sixth-largest producer and second-largest exporter of coal. The extent of the U.M.W.'s victory will be determined by the courts in the coming months, but it is clear that the union has beaten back the most concerted attack on it in recent years and that the legal battles with Massey should only increase the scope of its victory.

In October 1984, when the U.M.W. began its strike against Massey's mines in the Tug River Valley section of Kentucky and West Virginia, it was not looking for trouble. Coal prices were down, and 45,000 of its 155,000 active members were laid off. For the first time in twenty years, the union had concluded a wage agreement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (B.C.O.A.) without resorting to a strike, settling for a modest raise in wages and added protection against subcontracting to nonunion operations.

Massey, however, had refused to sign the agreement. In so doing, Massey, which since 1980 has been owned by the Fluor Corporation and the Royal Dutch/Shell Group and has seen its coal production rise dramatically, was not claiming economic hardship. The company's decision not to sign was based on its insistence that its individual mines were run independently and were thus entitled to negotiate separate contracts with workers.

Massey's claim was a declaration of war. In order to maintain their re-employment and pension rights, miners work on a system that allows them, when their company closes a mine, to move to another of that company's mines on the basis of their seniority. Without such a transfer

Nicolaus Mills, who is working on a book about the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964, is the author of The Crowd in American Literature, to be published in the fall by Louisiana State University Press. He is a member of the editorial board of Dissent.

NATION REPRINTS

K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew And When We Knew It

Published on the eve of the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, this issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the tragedy. After a year of thorough research, author David Pearson concludes that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted, and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry. (August 18/25, 1984)

K.A.L. 007: Unanswered Questions

This issue brings our 1984 report up to date. With contributions by David Pearson, John Keppel and David Corn, it is the culmination of an intensive investigation. The authors analyze new Japanese radar data, discuss a Nation Institute-sponsored review, by aviation experts, of the final airline transmission and describe the government's efforts to obstruct investigation. (August 17/24, 1985)

Central America

Appearing just after the release of the controversial Kissinger report, the special issue on Central America offered a strong refutation of the Administration's views. The arguments still hold. Highlighted by Walter LaFeber's overview, William LeoGrande's analysis of the domestic political fallout and Peter Davis's compelling firsthand report on the Nicaraguan revolution today, the issue is one of the most urgent, informative and important in *The Nation's* history. (January 28, 1984)

Many Bhopals: Technology Out of Control

Robert Engler reveals that the dangerous dependence on pesticides and the movement away from people-intensive agriculture results from corporate profit-making strategies. In addition, he shows that the Bhopal disaster is one of countless poisonings occurring each year, here and in the Third World, under an irresponsible scientific-corporate elite. (April 27, 1985)

The Education Wars

Teachers, education watchers, journalists and scholars join forces to retake much of the ground recently occupied by Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education. With its healthy mix of policy issues and practical matters, "The Education Wars" is indispensable to anyone with a stake in the continuing battle over our schools. (May 25, 1985)

Reflections on a Glass House: The U.N. at 40

On the fortieth birthday of the United Nations, nine scholars and activists provide an examination of the U.N.'s achievements and failures. They analyze the history of U.S. participation in the United Nations and assess the organization's role in disarmament, Middle East negotiations and in relations between the developed countries and the Third World. The issue serves as a much-needed rebuttal to the arguments of would-be U.N.-bashers. (September 21, 1985)

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system—panel rights, as they are known in the industry—a miner would go back to the probationary status he had on first entering the mine when the coal seam he was working on gave out. Simply by changing mine sites a company could constantly acquire workers to whom it had no pension obligations and to whom it could always pay starting wages, no matter what their experience. In attempting to evade panel rights, Massey made no secret of its aims. "You can't discipline union miners, and you can't discharge them," Don Blankenship, a high-level Massey official, told reporters during the strike. "You have to be able to purge your work force of unproductive elements in some way."

There was no way the union could compromise on such a challenge. If Massey could end the panel rights of its workers by doing nothing more than declaring that its mines were independent operations, then the U.M.W. would have no way to protect its membership in the future. Nor could the union expect to hold on to its present contracts with the B.C.O.A. For the rest of the industry the Massey lesson would be unmistakable: decentralize.

Charging that Massey was playing a "corporate shell game" and engaging in unfair labor practices, the union took its case to the National Labor Relations Board and went on strike. Last December the U.M.W.'s charge was upheld when the company effectively admitted that it was a common employer for the workers of all its mines by signing a National Labor Relations Board agreement. It promised to bargain with the U.M.W. as a single company and granted its U.M.W. strikers the status of "unfair-labor-practice strikers."

For the U.M.W. the result is a vindication of the legal charges on which its N.L.R.B. suit was based. The outcome also signals that under the leadership of Richard Trumka the U.M.W. is once again a force to be reckoned with in the nation's coal fields. Beginning in the 1960s, when W.A. (Tony) Boyle succeeded John L. Lewis as president of the United Mine Workers, the union fell on troubled times. Boyle was sentenced to life imprisonment for ordering the murder of Joseph Yablonski, his opponent in the 1969 election, and while his successors, Arnold Miller and Sam Church, infused democracy into the U.M.W., their leadership was uninspired, especially in contract negotiations. Not until Trumka, a lawyer and former miner, took over in 1982 did the U.M.W. have a leader with the talent and commitment to union democracy that promised the kind of formidable that had been missing since Lewis's retirement.

The difference was immediately apparent in the style Trumka, then just 33, brought to the union presidency. One had only to look at him in his three-piece suit or listen to him speak on the impact of multinationals on union wages to know that no longer would mine owners bring a more sophisticated agenda to negotiations than the U.M.W. Trumka began his tenure with a housecleaning, trimming the union's enormous monthly overhead and installing former miners as administrative and executive assistants. In 1984 he negotiated a B.C.O.A. contract that, in an era of union givebacks, got the miners a 10.25 percent raise. The major challenge facing Trumka, however, was making sure

the U.M.W., which, by its estimates, mines approximately 50 percent of the nation's coal, maintains its share of production and, wherever possible, wins new contracts. The Massey strike provided the first important test of his leadership.

Against Massey, Trumka steered the union on a new course. In the past the U.M.W. had relied on industrywide strikes to win contracts. Trumka challenged Massey with a selective strike that he knew would be lengthy but that would not jeopardize union coal mines, which face stiff competition from foreign producers and from nonunion surface mines in the West. "It's not going to be a knockout; it's going to go fifteen rounds," Trumka warned the strikers at an early rally in West Virginia. The union amassed a strike fund of \$70 million by assessing its working members 2.5 percent of their salaries. To put its strikers in a financial position to survive a long battle, the union took over their health insurance plans and set their strike pay at \$200 a week.

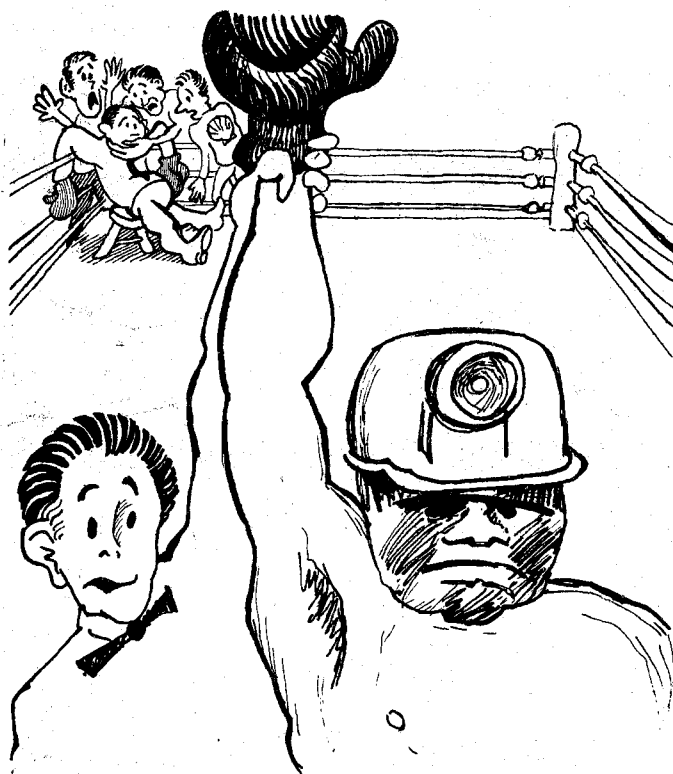
The key factor, however, was the U.M.W.'s ability to counter Massey's attempts to put it on the defensive. What miners faced with Massey were unionbusting tactics much like the ones their predecessors had confronted sixty years earlier, when the U.M.W. was struggling for recognition in southern West Virginia and Mingo County became known as Bloody Mingo. In those days the mine workers fought gun battles with the Baldwin-Felts detective agency and the West Virginia State Police. The organizing drive was finally defeated in 1921, at the Battle of Blair Mountain, when 10,000 armed miners, the largest insurrection since the Civil War, surrendered to U.S. Army troops. If that conflict could be compared to World War I, the one with Massey resembled the war in Vietnam.

Drawing on a \$200,000 monthly "security" budget, Massey used helicopters and an armored personnel carrier against the union. Trailers were parked on company grounds to house security guards, who were afraid to live in the pro-union towns and hollows surrounding the struck mines. When tensions were high, the Chicago-based firm of Gardner Stern Jr., which specializes in "scab catering," helicoptered in hot meals for the Massey guards. In Massey's eyes the miners were a guerrilla army to be overcome. In short order the company put in place its version of a strategic hamlets program. The mines were surrounded by miles of chain link fence, with cement observation posts manned by uniformed guards with cameras. At night the mine sites were illuminated by floodlights and resembled small football stadiums. Massey's aim was to protect its mines from union demonstrators and, in the meantime, to use nonunion drivers, protected by State Police or Massey security, to haul out coal.

Early in 1985 the U.M.W. thwarted that strategy by preventing Massey from busing nonunion workers into the mines. In February, when Massey threatened to fire all the employees at its Sprouse Creek processing plant who did not report for the 7:30 A.M. shift, the union countered with a mass demonstration reminiscent of the civil rights protests of the 1960s. The forty-eight U.M.W. workers at Sprouse Creek showed up at 7:30 as ordered, but behind them,

stretching a quarter-mile down the road, were more than 800 other union members, singing "We Shall Not Be Moved." Operations at the facility were completely disrupted. In March, when Massey again tried to haul coal by truck, the union unveiled a new tactic, the "serpentine." Members parked their vans and cars in a snakelike pattern along the road leading to the Sprouse Creek plant, making it impossible for coal trucks to enter. The haulers Massey had hired remained locked inside their cabs while demonstrators milled around them and police attempted to clear the road by ticketing the miners' vehicles.

By late March, fines and injunctions against the union and the convoying of Massey trucks by state troopers had limited the U.M.W.'s ability to stop coal shipments, but by then the U.M.W.'s determination to see the strike through had been established. The union was not going to fold under pressure, and coal shipping in the Tug River Valley was never going back to normal so long as there was a strike. All summer long, nonunion coal haulers, fearing sniping, did not dare drive at night, and in the fall, as Massey began to close some struck mines and sell off others to unionized operators, it was clear that the company, despite its executives' claims that the strike had become a "nonissue," was feeling the effects of a battle it thought would have ended long before. Equally important, it was clear that Shell, as one of Massey's principal owners, would soon feel the strike as well. During the summer, informational picketing at Shell gas stations in Wheeling, West Virginia, had shown that it was easy to get Shell customers to take their business elsewhere; in the fall the union, which has actively supported TransAfrica's antiapartheid demonstrations, moved toward a corporate campaign protesting Shell's labor and human rights policies in South Africa.



The U.M.W.'s decision to call off its strike after Massey signed the N.L.R.B. agreement reflected its belief that it had accomplished what it set out to do and that it could win more in the courtroom at that point than on the picket line. The decision was not an easy one given Massey's public statements that it had not violated the labor relations law and that the strikers would not be covered by the B.C.O.A. contract.

Legal precedent supports the union's contention that the Massey strikers are protected by the contract. Section 1A(f) of the agreement states that it covers "all the coal lands, coal producing and coal preparation facilities" owned or leased by any B.C.O.A. signer. Since two of Massey's currently operating subsidiaries, Omar Mining Company of West Virginia and Vesta Mining Company of Pennsylvania, are B.C.O.A. signatories and own some of the struck mines, it would appear that Massey's other pits also fall under B.C.O.A. protection. Massey can no longer claim that its subsidiaries are independent operations.

By sending back its workers, the U.M.W. preserved their jobs. By granting its miners the status of strikers in an unfair-labor-practice dispute, Massey was legally obligated to rehire all those willing to return to work, even if it meant firing replacement workers. Had the U.M.W. continued its strike sixty days past the December settlement, it would have been on an economic strike, and Massey could have hired anyone it chose and even could have called for a decertification election in which its nonunion employees would have the right to vote on whether they wanted a union.

Apparently, Massey signed the N.L.R.B. agreement thinking it would be able to do just that. The company has appeared unprepared for the union's decision to send its workers back and rely on the courts to settle the remaining issues. Rather than attempt to reduce the bitterness left over from the strike, Massey has gone out of its way to heighten tension. Company president E. Morgan Massey described the strike settlement as the U.M.W.'s "unconditional surrender," and then took out a half-page newspaper advertisement to make sure his statement got the play he wanted. The company has moved slowly on calling workers back, making clear that it plans to do everything in its power to bar anyone who had been charged with misconduct or violence. To date, none of the presidents of the striking U.M.W. locals have been called back, and all of them expect that it will take further negotiation or a court battle before they are.

Although the U.M.W. has won one of the most important labor conflicts of the 1980s, it will be a long time before it does any celebrating. *The Williamson Daily News*, the main newspaper for the Tug River Valley, greeted the end of the strike with a front-page editorial, declaring: "Yes, West Virginia. There is a Santa Claus. The Tug River Valley has received a magnificent Christmas present for 1985: a gift of hope." But if any Santa Claus visited the Tug River Valley, it was the Santa I saw this summer on a homemade billboard along the road leading to Blackberry Mine. That St. Nick was a cartoon scab, dressed in a green suit. Around his feet were a ball and chain. In his right hand, a skull and bones;

in his left, dollar bills. There was nothing despairing about this version of Santa; just the reverse. He was a reminder of the mine workers' resolve. They realize there is no quick fix for their battle with Massey, no magic formula for getting their lives back to normal. □

When Hope

(Continued From Front Cover)

government had collapsed and Duvalier had fled.

But Baby Doc and his greedy in-laws, the Bennetts, had not gone into exile to enjoy their family fortune, estimated at \$400 million by *The Miami News* last August. Instead of decamping, Duvalier decreed a thirty-day state of siege and a news blackout. He banned foreign journalists from traveling to the provinces to cover the protests and began clamping down in the despotic tradition of his father, Dr. François (Papa Doc) Duvalier. So the Haitian people's initial euphoria gave way to despair. Some here blamed Speakes's premature announcement for breaking the momentum of the protests and putting the United States on the defensive. Many felt their optimism had been proved wrong once again. The strength of the antigovernment movement—faceless, unarmed and leaderless so that the government could not root it out—was also its greatest weakness. Because the rebels could not articulate their vision of a post-Duvalier Haiti, the nation's elite, an uninspired oligarchy that instinctively opposes any change as a threat to its privileges, feared them.

The regime blames human rights sermons in Catholic churches for stirring up the people. Ironically, Papa Doc had broken the power of the so-called old Catholic Church, which was allied with the oligarchy of mulatto families. He expelled the troublesome priests, paving the way for a "new Catholic Church," headed by black Haitians. He also sought to counteract the church's influence by opening the country to American fundamentalists, who poured in, finding that Haiti offered a fertile field for proselytizing and attracted donations in the United States. There are now more than 350 Protestant sects in the country, many of whom fear the growing power of the Catholic Church and accuse priests of being communists. They take no comfort from the U.S. Embassy's conclusion that the recent protests were spontaneous and that there is no evidence of foreign involvement, by Cuba or any other Communist power. In fact, in Gonaïves and St. Marc the protesters waved U.S. flags and called on Washington to rid them of Duvalier. They invoked Reagan's invasion of Grenada in 1983 and Lyndon Johnson's intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 as precedents.

At least sixteen representatives of Protestant churches, many of them mainline denominations, have signed a letter supporting both the Catholic Church and the Haitian stu-

Michael B. Savage is the pseudonym of a journalist who frequently reports on Haiti.

dents. The churchmen, who describe themselves as apolitical, condemned "the violence, crime, injustice and oppression" in Haiti and called for a "rapid and pacific end to the crisis for the unfortunate Haitian people too long deprived of dignity and happiness."

Condemnation of the regime has come from another, more surprising quarter, the powerful Association of Industries of Haiti (A.D.I.H.). In a letter made public on January 13, leading industrialists took what was considered an extremely daring step, calling for progress toward a democratic Haiti and omitting any endorsement of the dictatorship. After several soul-searching meetings and what was described as a long and intense debate, the business leaders decided to support the students' cause. The government responded to the letter by summoning the industrialists to the National Palace for a meeting with the Cabinet. According to a person who attended, "the ministers offered old arguments and no concessions."

The industrialists also charged that economic development was at a standstill because of the "reigning climate of fear and tensions." They pointed out that foreign press reports on the rioting were scaring away investors:

Our contractors are voicing their concern and some foreign firms already have made the decision either to avoid or withdraw operations in Haiti in favor of other countries. This is a situation in which our fragile export industry is facing catastrophe; it places in jeopardy the 60,000 jobs on which nearly 300,000 people in Port-au-Prince depend, not forgetting the industries which also supply the local market.

The letter also contains a powerful statement of principles:

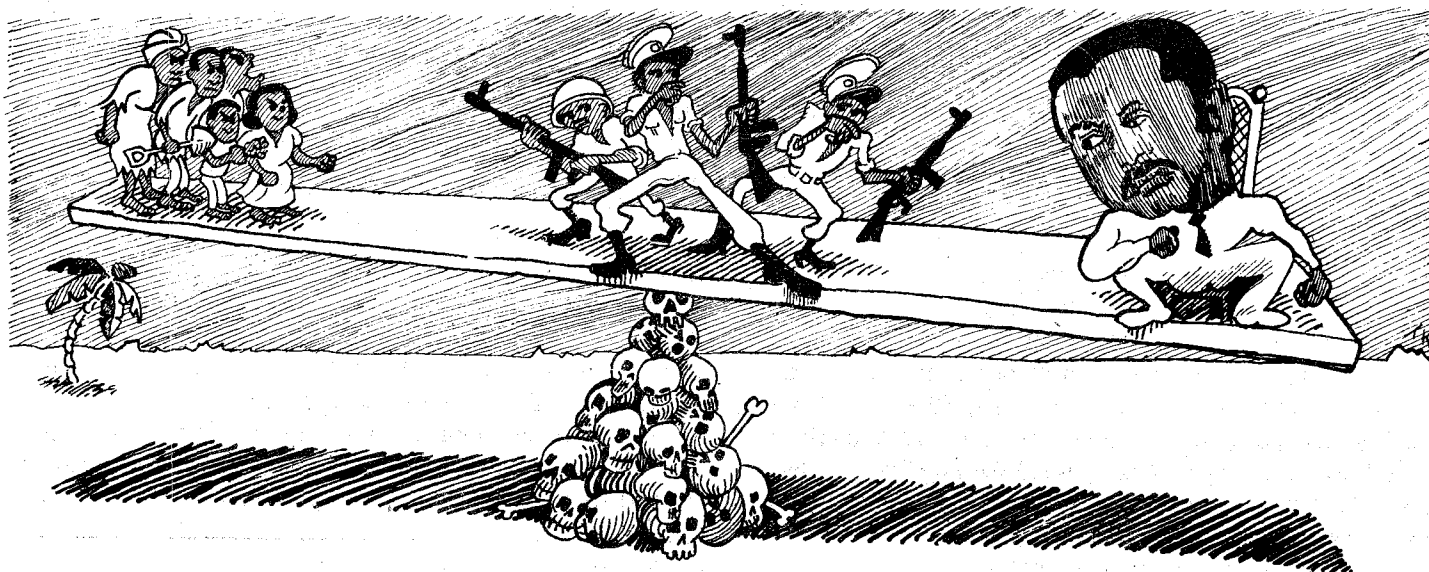
The chief of state has already personally broached the prospect of establishing democracy which he hopes is irreversible. Once the country is engaged on this path we assume all are ready that divergent opinions be expressed in a climate of human rights and fundamental liberties. . . . Only a democratic Haiti can enhance a burgeoning climate of investment which would enable us to play our part in this society fully . . . to activate strong investment and bring about the realization of our dreams to see doubled and even tripled the current

total of employment in the years to come. . . . It is, therefore, our opinion that the rulers of our country should manifest tolerance and moderation in order to widen the democratic debate which is imperative to our people's survival.

The A.D.I.H. letter was emblematic of the new political forces unleashed by the current turmoil. "What is happening right now," said a young Haitian who studied labor relations in the United States, "is that along with the students, the church and other groups who are fed up with the dictatorship, there is also a small group of tenacious and articulate Haitians who have a very clear sense of the country they want. None of them think it's going to be easy or painless, that it's going to happen overnight. All, however, have a feeling that it cannot be stopped. The old days are disappearing fast."

In an attempt to counter the impact of the industrialists' letter, Ernest Bennett, President Duvalier's father-in-law, called on businessmen to sign a document supporting the government, issued in the name of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce. The letter endorsed a crackdown on dissent and contained this admonition: "We of the private sector have benefited from a political climate of stability which has allowed us to develop in an environment adequate for the promotion of investment." Most of the signers were those with government monopolies or contracts. On February 3 the Port-au-Prince business community was divided over how to respond to the protesters' appeal to keep shops closed and force Duvalier to abdicate. The following day most stores were closed, but some owners still wonder if democracy would be good for business. Leaflets calling for a general strike have also appeared.

Duvalier is much more vulnerable than was his father, who vowed that his enemies would never get him out of the palace alive. "Jean-Claude is only as good as his advisers, and much of the advice he receives is from his wife and father-in-law," one old Duvalierist told me. "The latter has only one interest, making money." After acceding to the presidency, Jean-Claude abandoned many of his father's police-state methods, saying they hampered the country's



economic development. He enjoyed a period of genuine popularity until 1980, when, many Duvalierists say, his current troubles began. That year he married Michèle Bennett, the daughter of a small-time coffee speculator. She had been married to the eldest son of Capt. Alix Pasquet, leader of the first rebellion against François Duvalier in July 1958, which, of all the attempts to overthrow him, came closest to succeeding. Jean-Claude turned his back on many of his father's black supporters and spurned the philosophy of negritude. In the eyes of many Duvalierists his marriage represented a sellout to the largely mulatto elite, to which his wife belonged.

In 1978, Baby Doc proclaimed a new, almost incomprehensible philosophy called Jean-Claudeism, which was supposed to supplant Duvalierism. In the present crisis, however, he has reverted to the faith of his father. In his Christmas Day message he announced that "only with Duvalierism" could the country develop. He was seeking to appeal to his father's old supporters, known as the Duvalierists of 1957. When he called some of them to the palace for the expected endorsement, however, they told him that he must first exile the entire Bennett clan, something Jean-Claude is not prepared to do at this point. The Bennetts' questionable business deals did as much to erode support for the regime as did recent allegations of corruption against members of the Super Cabinet, the inner circle of ministers each of whom holds several portfolios. They were accused of having amassed fortunes during their tenures. Duvalier's advisers have suggested that he could gain a "breathing spell" by putting on trial the four Super Ministers he fired on January 31. They had been assigned to diplomatic posts abroad, but now they are barred from leaving Haiti. Official corruption is so pervasive, though, that it is doubtful such cosmetic surgery would appease the forces allied against the dynasty.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department decided not to certify to Congress that Haiti has made sufficient progress in human rights to qualify for \$7 million in direct aid to the government, cutting the country off from all but humanitarian funds. Haitian exiles now provide much of the

country's foreign exchange. The Port-au-Prince telephone exchange, Teleco, is called the money machine. As a Haitian banker explained: "Whenever someone with relatives abroad needs any money he lines up at Teleco and begs by phone for dollars. The Haitian can be very convincing, and the relative rarely turns him down." Last year Haitians living in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere in the Caribbean remitted more than \$150 million to relatives here.

Tourism is off by 80 percent, and most visitors during the Christmas holidays were Haitians, many of them now American citizens. Not a single rental car was available between Christmas and New Year's. "New York Haitians booked their cars months in advance," said a Budget Rent-a-car worker at the Dr. François Duvalier International Airport. "The Haitians come home for the traditional soup—and spend their money."

By mid-January most observers agreed that political conditions were steadily deteriorating. "The government has lost all pretense of legitimacy," said a businessman. "All it holds is a gun." Few believe that a bloody revolution can be averted. One thing seems certain: the longer the unrest continues, the more radical the protest movement will become. There is another fear. "If this thing trails on too long," observed one lawyer, "you'll have all the old crazies in exile trying to invade Haiti again to get their slice of the pie."

In the past, exile groups invaded or smuggled arms into the country by sea, but that route seems unlikely. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that continually patrol the seas around Haiti to turn back illegal immigrants would stop any parties heading the other way. The chances of a land attack launched from the neighboring Dominican Republic are also remote, since that country's government has barred anti-Duvalierist exiles from operating on its soil. Dominican officials fear that the trouble in Haiti might spill over their mutual border this year, when a crucial election is scheduled. "The battle is going to be waged inside Haiti," said a former Haitian diplomat. "There has never been in our history any initiative from the outside that has succeeded, except the U.S. Marine invasion of 1915." There is a growing belief here that the army will be the final arbiter in a showdown with Duvalier. The students in Gonaïves who shouted, "Vive l'armée!" were calling for a coup d'état.

But the army has been rendered impotent by purges and the execution of many members of the old officer corps. Today its 8,000 men are in eight combat units, each under the direct command of the President, rather than the army chief. Army units were not issued live ammunition until the protests began, and then in very small quantities. The armories containing heavy ammunition and artillery shells are all located close to the National Palace. Staring through black sunglasses at each army post and at each soldier are some 14,000 Volunteers of National Security, the militia created by Papa Doc in 1958 and made up of Tontons Macoutes killers. Papa Doc put down coups, mutinies, invasions and conspiracies with the ruthlessness of a Pol Pot. His son, however, has not faced similar challenges, and the fear in Port-au-Prince is that Jean-Claude will use the same bloody methods his father did and turn Haiti into a killing field. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Suicida and the Gang

ZACHARY SKLAR

WITH THE CONTRAS: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua. By Christopher Dickey. Simon & Schuster. 327 pp. \$18.95.

How is it that a handful of barbarous soldiers, universally despised when they were routed from Nicaragua six and a half years ago, have since grown into a fighting force of more than 10,000 that threatens the Sandinista government? How is it that the President of the United States can call this cruel collection of criminals, mercenaries, terrified peasants, upper-class landowners and former Somoza National Guardsmen "the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers" and not be laughed out of the White House? How can truth have been so stood on its head that many intelligent people in the U.S. government and the mainstream media now consider the *contras*, whose atrocities have been thoroughly documented, a "legitimate democratic alternative" to the "totalitarian" Sandinistas?

In this engrossing though uneven book, Christopher Dickey provides a lot of information to help answer those questions. A *Washington Post* reporter who covered Central America from 1980 to 1983, Dickey is a good gumshoe. His sordid story of the *contras*' rise emerges through interviews with a diverse cast of characters, including the murderous National Guard sergeant aptly called Suicida, onetime U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Lawrence Pezzullo, Sandinista hero turned *contra* Edén (Commander Zero) Pastora, Central Intelligence Agency point man Dewey Clarridge and Sacred Heart sister Lisa Fitzgerald.

The book begins on the eve of the Sandinista triumph, in July 1979. Anastasio Somoza's National Guard has collapsed and its remnants, several hundred troops led by Suicida, are pinned at San Juan del Sur with their backs to the Pacific Ocean. Sandinista Commander Pastora is ready to finish them off, but when he rises for the final battle he finds they have fled. Rather than pursue the Guard, Pastora seeks glory

and heads for Managua. There Ambassador Pezzullo has forced Somoza to strike a deal and flee the country. Chaos reigns at the airport as the dictator's wealthy supporters try to claw their way out. A mysterious North American named Bill, presumably a C.I.A. operative, flies in, somehow rounds up the cream of the National Guard and smuggles them to Miami. Meanwhile, Suicida and his troops have commandeered some fishing boats and are floating half-starved in the Gulf of Fonseca; four days later they land safely in El Salvador. So within a week of the revolution's triumph, the foundations of the counterrevolution are in place: the National Guard leadership in Miami; the grunts in El Salvador; the planning, money and technical assistance in Langley.

The experiences of the *contras* in 1980 and 1981 as they struggled to get organized varied according to their social class. In a Miami motel the elite Guard threw away food donated by the Jesus Foundation (they wanted their meals prepared as they had been in Managua), lounged around the pool and made calls to friends and relatives all over the world. Suicida and his less privileged followers drifted to Honduras and starved in makeshift camps as they waited for weapons. In Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, still other ex-Guardsmen assessed their skills in the job market and ended up hiring themselves out to the local masters of repression. Dickey documents how, for example, the fledgling *contras* plotted and carried out the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero in San Salvador in March 1980.

One of Dickey's strengths is that he sees the *contra* war as part of a regional political struggle. From the very beginning, he tells us, the *contras* were nurtured by the C.I.A.'s right-wing surrogates throughout Latin America: left-over agents of the 1954 coup in Guatemala, Miami-based veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion, Honduran security forces under Col. Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, the military junta then in power in Argentina. By the end of 1981 the days of hunger were over for the *contras*. Ronald Reagan had approved a plan: the United States would provide

the money (first installment, \$19 million) and the organizing; the Argentine military, expert in the techniques of terrorism, would handle the training; and Honduras would donate the base of operations. The plan seemed to serve everyone's purposes. The Hondurans got an infusion of money and military equipment; the Argentines vainly hoped their contribution would earn them Washington's neutrality when they later seized the Malvinas; and the Reagan Administration found an ingenious way to destabilize the Nicaraguan government without losing much North American blood.

The publicly stated goals remained murky—something about building a democratic opposition and pressuring the Sandinistas to stop sending arms to Salvadoran guerrillas. But the *contras* themselves had only one goal: the overthrow of the Sandinistas, who had humiliated them and stripped them of their privileges. The last thing characters like Suicida, Krill, Cancer and El Muerto wanted was democracy. Suicida's reputation as a brute who had murdered one man and beaten others was well established. Krill had joined the Guard because through it his family got "better doctors and schools and houses." Among the first non-Guard recruits to join the *contras* were a band of eight cattle rustlers and an escaped prisoner. Throughout the war such men, masquerading as democrats, would routinely rape and murder innocent people and fight among themselves. By the end of 1983 Krill alone had taken the lives of more than thirty people (not counting those he killed in combat), most of them unarmed prisoners and civilians but some his own commandos. Dickey captures some of this violence, but he conspicuously omits the views of even one Nicaraguan victim of the unspeakably obscene *contra* atrocities. These are documented far better elsewhere (see Reed Brody's book *Contra Terror in Nicaragua* (South End Press); a report by the Center for Constitutional Rights submitted to Congress in December 1984; and the Witness for Peace booklet *What We Have Seen and Heard*).

The Core Group, which decided Nicaragua policy in Washington, was well aware of *contra* terrorism but ignored it. Among the hard-liners and ideologues who made up the group, according to one of them, "there was a kind of

Zachary Sklar teaches at the Columbia University School of Journalism.

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tendency to want to prove your manhood." Thomas Enders, who had overseen the destruction of Cambodia and who, as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, headed the Core Group from its inception, met with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto Brockman in August 1981 and scolded him about Sandinista aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas. That was to be the Administration's only attempt at diplomacy before launching the *contra* war in earnest.

Under the guidance of Director of Central Intelligence William Casey and Dewey Clarridge (a "real take-charge guy," previously based in Rome), the *contra* war gained momentum. Dickey skillfully takes us through the whole mess—the disillusionment of Pastora and various landowners in Nicaragua, the periodic and meaningless housecleanings of the corrupt *contra* leadership, the C.I.A.'s outright lies to Congress and, most horrifying of all, the escalating violence. The Administration stepped up its aid, and the C.I.A. itself bombed the oil depots in Corinto, mined Nicaragua's harbors and produced the infamous assassination manual. But the bulk of the fighting was left to the *contras* and the peasants they kidnapped and terrified into joining them.

The climax of Dickey's book is his account of a harrowing week's excursion accompanying Suicida and Krill into combat. Dickey deserves credit for his courage and for establishing certain facts about the *contras* that at the time were still hazy (particularly the extent of National Guard involvement and the amount of U.S. equipment being used). The adventure story makes exciting reading, but it's impossible to know what it means. Krill was under orders to protect Dickey at all costs, and all the *contras* were coached on what to say to him. A farmer they encountered told Dickey that he believed in democracy, which he defined as "nobody messing with him." He said he sympathized with the *contras* but felt they had to clean up their act. Dickey's romanticizing of this farmer as one caught in the middle is cause for distress and distrust. What, after all, was the farmer saying? The *contras* cannot clean up their act; their act is terrorism, just as their C.I.A. bosses intend it to be.

Here and elsewhere in the book Dickey's assumptions undermine his reporting and his credibility. He would like to believe that the U.S. government shares

his reverence for liberal democratic values. How else to explain his preposterous statement that within the C.I.A. "freedom of expression is a cherished tradition"? Surely this experienced reporter is not ignorant of what has happened to agency dissenters John Marks, Victor Marchetti, Philip Agee, John Stockwell, Frank Snepp, Ralph McGehee and, most relevant in the case of Nicaragua, David MacMichael. Dickey sidesteps MacMichael, the former analyst who blew the whistle on the Administration's claim that Nicaragua has all along been shipping arms to Salvadoran guerrillas. He is curiously uncritical of the Reagan position on this matter. In an unconvincing footnote, he cites a State Department white paper that he admits has been discredited, saying that his interviews with unnamed Sandinista officials and Salvadoran guerrillas confirm its contents. Later, giving no source at all, he claims that as late as March 1982 the Sandinistas had increased their arms trafficking to the Salvadorans. Nowhere does he acknowledge MacMichael's public testimony that in investigating this matter for the agency from April 1981 to April 1983, he saw no persuasive evidence of any arms flow from Nicaragua to El Salvador. Nor does he explain why the United States, if it has such evidence, refuses to present it to the World Court.

Dickey's unquestioning acceptance of the *contras'* view of the Sandinistas is equally disturbing. Suicida's companion, La Negra, who Dickey admits is a notorious liar, complains of being tortured in Sandinista prisons. A young *contra* claims his father's land was taken away. Another portrays his local Sandinista Defense Committee as Big Brother telling him what to do and think and when to have inoculations. Dickey has verified none of these accounts. Amnesty International, Americas Watch and Food First, among others, have investigated similar allegations and have largely refuted them.

But Dickey adheres to one of the unspoken rules of mainstream journalism: Never say a good word about the Sandinistas. He makes no mention of Sandinista accomplishments, such as the reduction of illiteracy from 57 percent to 12 percent, the eradication of polio, the building of hundreds of health clinics, the distribution of land to 60,000 previously landless *campesinos*. He often dismisses Sandinista statements as "propaganda" and grouches about "to-

talitarian tendencies." In his epilogue he minimizes the importance of the 1984 elections, in which the Sandinista Front won 67 percent of the vote, by spending one line on them. Ditto for the Sandinistas' repeated conciliatory gestures toward Washington. Then he describes the Sandinistas as a military power "the likes of which Central America had never seen," somehow forgetting the presence of U.S. troops and ships on maneuvers in Central America in recent years. The Sandinistas come out sounding every bit the totalitarian, menacing monsters that Reagan makes them out to be.

Where does Dickey stand? I'm not sure from this book whether even he knows. Recognizing the corruption of the *contras* and perhaps disappointed that the embattled Sandinistas have not lived up to his North American ideals, he has taken the journalist's cop-out: a plague on both their houses. At *The Washington Post* Dickey may adopt

such a stance to maintain credibility with his editors, or perhaps the pressure of daily deadlines prevents deeper analysis. But in his own book a reporter must be held to a higher standard. He must take time for more thorough investigation and more profound reflection. That Dickey cannot bring himself to call the Reagan Administration's involvement with the *contras* exactly what it is—one of the great outrages of recent U.S. history—is unfortunate. That he lacks the perspective or the courage to acknowledge that the Sandinistas, imperfect as they are, have made a genuine attempt to improve the condition of Nicaragua's poor and have often been thwarted by this criminal war is shameful. Such failures, for which Dickey and his colleagues in the mainstream media must bear responsibility, contribute to the confusion in North Americans' minds and prolong the agony for Nicaraguans. □

Transformations

PHYLLIS ROSE

THE LIVES OF LEE MILLER. By Antony Penrose. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 216 pp. \$29.95.

Give a woman a Zeiss or a Nikon and she seems to become adventurous. Or perhaps adventurous women—Diane Arbus, Margaret Bourke-White, Gisèle Freund, Leni Riefenstahl—wield cameras. Lee Miller, one of the great beauties of the 1920s and 1930s, photographed by Steichen, Genthe and Hoyningen-Huene for the pages of *Vogue*, was not content to be the object of others' lenses. She became a photographer herself, shooting some of the grimmest sights ever recorded in Dachau and Buchenwald just after the war.

American born, she spent most of her life in Europe. Driven by a need for excitement, she explored corners of the continent rarely visited. She learned to charm snakes in the desert and had her back massaged by a dancing bear in Rumania. When she became pregnant at 40, she married Roland Penrose, the British art critic, collector and painter, and settled down on a Sussex

farm filled with modern masterpieces, where she entertained everyone who was anyone in the art world. Later, she became one of Britain's foremost authorities on cooking and put photography behind her. When people asked about her photographs, she said they had all been destroyed in the war. After her death at 70, in 1977, five hundred prints and 40,000 negatives were found in her barn, along with the letters and unpublished manuscripts which her son, Antony Penrose, used to create this absorbing and elegant biography.

Lee Miller seems always to have been in the right place at the right time. When she was nearly run over by a car in New York City in 1927, the man who saved her was Condé Nast. Miller soon arranged to have her face on the cover of *Vogue*. She had the best sort of American good looks: tall, relaxed, athletic. She looked the way Hemingway's Lady Brett might have looked: incapable of being shocked but not hardened, innocent but up for anything, beautiful in a new way—a way that did not depend on projecting vulnerability.

Her flapper body did indeed house a flapper soul. She did not romanticize sex. In love with one man, she made love with others. You could say she was promiscuous, or you could say sex was the way she explored life. In any case,

Phyllis Rose is the author of *Parallel Lives (Knopf)* and *Writing of Women (Wesleyan University Press)*.

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she epitomized the liberated woman of the 1920s. "I'm not Cinderella," she would tell Penrose. "I can't force my foot into the glass slipper." Sought after, surrounded, it must have seemed, by men who wanted in some way to appropriate her, she was wary of men and used them for her own purposes, among which were pleasure and instruction.

Working as a model in Paris at the end of the 1920s, she decided to learn photography. Typically, she went right to the top and approached Man Ray, announcing that she was his new student. When Man Ray said he didn't take students and moreover was about to leave Paris for a stay in the south of France, she said she was going with him and she did. They remained together for about three years, and together they invented the solarization technique associated with Man Ray. Through him Miller made friends with many Surrealist artists; she found their esthetic congenial to her own uninhibited, humorous, inventive imagination. One day she watched a radical mastectomy in a Paris hospital and asked the surgeons for the breast they had removed. She carried it on a plate to the offices of French *Vogue* and was promptly thrown out.

In 1932 she returned to New York and opened her own photographic studio. In this grim Depression year, she was taking a big risk, but she managed to make a go of it. Hardly had she established herself when she gave it all up to marry an Egyptian businessman, Aziz Eloui Bey, whom she had met in Paris. She went with him to Cairo, where she lived the privileged if tedious life of a wealthy married woman in a poor country. Apparently that energetic and adventurous soul also wanted to be pampered and cared for. But soon she was organizing trips into the desert to alleviate her boredom, and soon her boredom drove her back to photography. She did some Surrealist landscapes. Her husband, a man of seemingly inexhaustible patience, indulged her and paid for her extended journeys in the company of various men. Eventually she went to Penrose in England

and never returned to Aziz.

World War II provided Lee Miller with her finest hour. She did an inspired series of photographs of London during the blitz for a book called *Grim Glory: Pictures of Britain Under Fire*. She also began working with the great *Life* photographer Dave Scherman on a series of assignments about Britain at war: a story about the women's navy corps, the WRENS; another about a female searchlight crew; another about Henry Moore as a war artist. In 1944, six weeks after D-day, Miller, who had got herself accredited as a U.S. War Correspondent, landed in Normandy. "Something had unfettered Lee's talent, and all her previous experiences were now channelled into one direction," writes Antony Penrose. "Gone was the *soigné* appearance and the refined taste in food and wine; now she wore crumpled battle dress and ate K rations or worse." She both photographed and wrote about the liberation of Saint Malo for *Vogue*. It was for *Vogue*, in fact, that she did all her great photojournalism. With incredible daring and resourcefulness, she escaped house arrest in Saint Malo (she had violated the terms of her accreditation by being in a combat zone) and got to Paris in time for its liberation. As soon as she could, she went to see old friends, including Picasso, who was astonished that the first person he saw in Allied uniform was the legendary beauty, Lee Miller.

Miller installed herself, with the rest of the press corps, in the Hôtel Scribe and started turning out copy. Writing did not come easily to her. Much liquor and much pressure were needed to enable this otherwise uninhibited woman to forget her inhibitions about composition. To her delight, Dave Scherman turned up at the Hôtel Scribe and eventually, at the expense of her coverage of the first Paris fashion collections after the liberation (she was still working for *Vogue*, after all), the two set out for the front.

They followed the infantry through Alsace into Germany, taking pictures all the way. They photographed Dachau. Miller sent the photographs back to the London office of *Vogue* with the cable, "I implore you to believe this is true." Scoop followed scoop. Billeted in Munich with the 45th Division, Miller and Scherman discovered that the nondescript house they were in had been Hitler's. Scherman photographed Miller taking a bath in Hitler's bathtub. They

were also on the scene when the army reached Hitler's house at Berchtesgaden and photographed it in flames. From the rubble, Miller snatched a silver tray with the monogram AH entwined in a swastika. She used it for serving drinks in London.

The photographs Miller took in Central and Eastern Europe in 1945-46 are extraordinary by any standards. Two American soldiers in Red Cross helmets, well fed, relaxed, stare as though from behind plate glass at an emaciated corpse lying open-eyed and open-mouthed in a boxcar. The dead daughter of the burgo-master of Leipzig—she had committed suicide—is so beautifully laid out on a sofa that one has to pause and admire her skin, her teeth, her hair, her pose. The fascist ex-Prime Minister of Hungary stands without blindfold before a firing squad not five feet away.

When Miller returned to civilian life, she found nothing there to match the intensity of the war years. She began to suffer from depression. Her doctor told her, "We cannot keep the world permanently at war to provide you with excitement." Never easy to get along with, drink and age made her increasingly difficult. She gave up photography and writing, which took too much out of her. In her late 40s, she lost her looks. Her husband's career flourished while hers seemed to shrink. Her son disliked her and lost no opportunity to hurt her.

This book, then, represents an act of reconciliation. All children are destined to discover their parents' imperfections, but children who write about their parents—if they are good writers and if they want to produce something more complex than a *Mommie Dearest*—must have learned to forgive those imperfections. Antony Penrose has done this with extraordinary grace. Although he says he made some peace with his mother in the years when she found salvation in the kitchen, he seems only to have been fully reconciled to her in writing this book: "The Lee I discovered was very different from the one I had been embattled with for so many years. and I am left with a profound regret that I did not know her better." With characteristic tact, he tells us this in a postscript, because such a personal note would be out of place in the text proper. There, he writes with an elegant and tactful distance which one would be pleased to think he learned from his mother. □

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an Army base, bomb Washington shopping streets, spray hotel dining rooms with machine-gun fire and set off some sort of hand-held missiles at the U.S. Capitol.

The familiar array of Washington officials native to the worst-case genre are, of course, helpless in the face of fanaticism. No one even knows for sure where the terrorists are trained or based or supplied, although most people suspect Iran, and pressure is building on President Hal Holbrook to bomb the Ayatollah on general principles rather than hard evidence. Only F.B.I. Director Peter Strauss (an ex-cop) and Secretary of Defense Paul Winfield (he be liberal) recommend caution. Conversation in the Oval Office and environs goes something like this (all dialogue guaranteed, although not necessarily in order):

"Maybe the only way to fight terrorism is to become terrorists ourselves."

"These bombings are no different than Pearl Harbor; it's a declaration of a new kind of war."

"These people in the Middle East, they have their own mentality; we insist on dealing with them as if they were the same as us."

"Compared to what we're up against, Al Capone was a piece of cake."

"Police don't create terrorists, politics do."

"It's hard to believe this is Washington; it looks like South America."

I suppose people do talk that way—wasn't it Attorney General John Mitchell who peered down from a Justice Department balcony on the crowd of demonstrators at the November 1969 Moratorium and declared, "It looks just like a Russian Revolution"?—but surely not in such an uninterrupted stream of clichés, all of which sound as if they were gleaned from a month's worth of *Washington Post* Op-Ed pieces. But talk is what deadens *Under Siege* after the first explosive minutes of terrorist activity. There goes the Capitol, and suddenly the movie becomes a high-level Washington soap opera with too little sex and too much anguish. Everybody seems to know one another, just like by the Carringtons. The F.B.I. guy's wife lunches with the editor of the big newspaper; the Secretary of State's wife seems to be everywhere; the editor and the C.I.A. chief take a steam bath together; the whole cast shows up at a

Presidential ball; the Iranian Ambassador pops in on the White House chief of staff; and even the elusive Ladeen gets so many visitors that he might as well hold open house.

The debate at the highest echelons concerns not only the advisability of bombing countries just for the hell of it (similar discussions are said to be current in the Reagan Administration) but also the willingness of the constitutionally elected or legally appointed officials to suspend the Constitution and disregard the law. One imagines there are discussions in that area this week in Washington as well. "With all due respect, this is not a police state," F.B.I. Director Strauss says, just before another bomb sends him diving to the floor of the Capitol. But with all the roadblocks, stop-and-frisks, curbside detentions and embryonic death squads, not much respect may be due. "We can't just go around the streets clubbing people just because they come from the Middle East," the F.B.I. wife (Victoria Tennant) says. Oh no?

For whatever reasons, Woodward et al. had a much harder time finding appropriate clichés for their terrorists than they did for their Democrats and Republicans. I'm not giving anything away by saying that the attack is not an Iranian operation, nor is there any implication of Soviet, Cuban, Angolan, Nicaraguan or Vietnamese involvement. Half a line in one of Ladeen's soliloquies suggests the hated Palestinians have a hand in the massacres, but for some reason that suggestion is never developed and is, in fact, specifically contradicted soon after it is made. What emerges as a motive for the extravagant military operation is a generalized Third World anti-Americanism. "I want to educate Americans to know what it is to suffer as so many Third World people have suffered before," Ladeen intones, his jaw set tightly under a Don Johnson stubble. And again, "The United States has exploited the world long enough. . . . I have much to say to your nation."

This is wrong? Something seems to have happened to the politics of *Under Siege* on the way to the network feed. It comes out feeling like a defense of the terrorists: not of their dastardly murders, of course, but of their motives. Leave it to *Post* liberals to project their imperial guilt onto a ragtag bunch of *pie* noir assassins and Baader-Meinhof bombers. Even the images are double-edged. What Washington reporter's heart won't leap for

just a moment in secret glee at the sight of the great dome of the Capitol exploding under fire, and all those smarmy legislative aides getting bumped on the head by falling blocks of marble?

As you must have already guessed, the C.I.A. turns out to be the villain. And the republic is saved by the press's revelation of official wrongdoing. Reporters have only one plot in their heads.

Utopia is a nice place to visit but you wouldn't want to live there. From Alpha-ville to Oz, movies have created fantastic futures and perilous paradises that seem like fun for a few minutes but invariably begin to pall on the long side of two hours. In the worst of these possible worlds, life is so deliberately oppressive that meaningful work consists only in escape. But even in the best, the familiar marvels and gratuitous miracles ultimately make demands one would rather avoid, like trips to Florida with rich relatives or a gift-boxed set of Proust. *Frisch weht der Wind der Heimat zu*; click your heels and hope for home.

Terry Gilliam, the American anchor of Monty Python and the graphic visionary of the group, constructed a sumptuously squalid Erewhon for *Brazil*, but he lingers there too long and soon the thrill is gone. Universal Studios, for all its philistine conceit, must have sensed his lapse of judgment, for it refused to distribute the picture in the United States (it was doing well in Europe) until a good chunk of it was cut. Gilliam, of course, suspected Universal of political cowardice or, worse, crass commercialism and held out for the original version. Gilliam won; but Universal was right. Indeed, producers are almost always right when they want to chop a digit or two from a director's beloved baby. Coppola, Leone, Cimino and Bertolucci (do we detect an ethnic motif?) may scream when their cinematic operas are shortened, but length never made a bad movie good, and often makes a good one bad. Nothing exceeds like excess.

In the case of *Brazil*, while the going is good there is a lot of visual excitement, a few laughs and a dash of dark satire that seems genuinely radical in the current context. The setting is "somewhere in the twentieth century," and more specifically in London in an advanced stage of authoritarian rule and social decay. Power is shared by two overweening bureaucracies: the Ministry of Information, which is the direc-

torate of control, and Central Services, the totalitarian maintenance people. The M.O.I. is charged with tracking, catching and torturing terrorists who persist in their disruptions; and C.S. sends its repair crews out to harass hapless victims of heating and air conditioning failure.

The news from nowheresville is that the M.O.I. made a mistake in identifying a terrorist suspect and has tortured the wrong man to death. That sets off a chain of events that radicalizes the one man in the fascist totality who still dreams of flight, freedom and a life of love and beauty. Sam (Jonathan Pryce) is just another faceless information bureaucrat until his fantasies take form as the plucky gamin (Kim Greist) who operates on the margins of the terrorist group, a kind of alternative culture dedicated to opposing consumerism and privilege. The guerrillas can detonate their bombs at will—in crowded boutiques and society lunchrooms—because the bureaucracies are hilariously inept. The managers are incompetent, the technology is junk and the routine is restrictive. Only the terrorists have the know-how to make things work. When Sam's heating system goes on the fritz, a dashing guerrilla plumber (Robert DeNiro) appears and improvises a repair. Later, the official C.S. crew bungles the same job so badly that the organic ductwork bursts from the bowels of the building and destroys the apartment. The spirit of the people, you see, is greater than the Man's technology.

Brazil—the title comes from the romantic pop song of the same name and serves as an idyllic counterpoint to the cold horrors of mid-Holocaustal Britain—resonates with thematic melodies from film fantasies. It's not that other movies are literally quoted, but they pop up as uninvited and perhaps unintended referents throughout the long ordeal. There are echoes of *1984*, the *Mad Max* trilogy, *Blade Runner*, *Logan's Run*, *Soylent Green*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Escape from New York*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Birdy*, *Brewster McCloud*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Trial*, *Dune*, *Metropolis*, *Modern Times* and, of course, the *Gesammelte Python* works, including Gilliam's previous efforts, *Jabberwocky* and the trippy *Time Bandits*. Cinema self-consciousness is an escape in itself, and it usually suggests that filmmakers are

uncomfortable with, or uncertain of, the meaning of their film. Here Gilliam, who co-wrote *Brazil* with Tom Stoppard and Charles McKeown, seems to want to swallow his symbols, to pre-digest the satire before it's finally set before the audience. Terrorism gets his approval—which is a big plus these days when mass bombers have had such a tough time in the press—but it's joke terrorism in the movie's own terms. Materialism and narcissism take a beating (Katherine Helmond as Sam's upper-class mum in the throes of radical plastic surgery is hilariously grotesque) but not much that it matters. The plot revolves around the cliché *omnia vincit amor*, and although the conclusion (there are six or seven false endings, when people in the audience actually gather up their coats and totes and begin pushing into the aisles) is hardly happy, it is not so downbeat as I gather Universal feared. More to the point, Sam gets to keep his fantasies, which is as much as one can reasonably expect in utopia or otherwise. □

ARCHITECTURE.

JANE HOLTZ KAY

It is not surprising that Tracy Kidder's *House* (Houghton Mifflin, 333 pp., \$17.95) bears no picture of a house on its cover—just the tools, tool box, saw, level, nails. And no architect either, nor builder or client. After all, an image might undercut its Everyman icon of the house.

And icon it is: icon of the American dream, the single-family home stands on its solitary lot. Anonymous, unadulterated by any particular size or shape, it may lack that identifiable form called architecture, but it lives in the mind all the same.

Not that the object of Kidder's tale has remained anonymous. Before *The New York Times* and the shelter magazines had finished glamorizing the building of the Souweines' Greek Revival edifice on western Massachusetts farmland, their home in Amherst was the best-known dwelling since *Little House on the Prairie*, their struggle was as familiar as the one in that Holly-

Jane Holtz Kay is a co-author of Preserving New England, forthcoming from Pantheon.

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wood classic, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, and the structure's style as much dissected as Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia.

What accounts for the success of this saga when most architecture books are remaindered before the brass knockers on the traditional new house need polishing? For openers, this particular Parthenon had a scribe with Homeric skills. Kidder, last seen probing *The Soul of a New Machine*, adapted his narrative talents to give us the soul (or dollars and sense) of a new (or new-old) machine—a machine for living in, as Le Corbusier put it. He chose his characters well; his carpenters wield words as well as tools, and his hero and heroine are *Big Chill* leftovers thawing out in the material world. If things are in the saddle these days, then these riders were well equipped "with every piece of sports equipment they could have." The Esalen generation shops Conran's.

Beyond that, of course, the house is and always has been the archetype of the American dream, the nation's ultimate architectural aspiration. A room of one's own, the feminist version of the vision, is clearly amputated from a larger passion: a Paul Bunyan vision as intense and durable as any other in this nation of dreamers.

As dreams go, it is not a deadly one. If it is as full of folly these days as *Fantasy Island*, that is not an exclusively modern affair. "I am at present in the process of ruining myself by building a fine house," Lord Chesterfield wrote. Even in the heyday of classicism, Abbé Laugier was wondering about the cost of applying historic elements of the past to architecture. "The Five Orders are not suitable for every kind of building because they involve expenses which not everybody is able to afford," he wrote in 1753. More recently, "house poor," the phrase of twenty years ago, was the poor man's version of the phenomenon. And even now, the English country house exhibition in Washington and the display of documents on constructing the humongous Pension Building on display there, reveal the popularity of such dreams writ large. *House* merely updates such passions.

It updates them in part by dint of its stylistic aspirations. A little temple on the farmland fits a very topical search for the past: the preservationist labor for vintage architecture and the post-modern replication of it. True, the original Greek Revival (1820-50) had more originality and adventurousness.

Still, today's looking backward partakes of the same adoration. Architects want to adorn every column, it sometimes seems, to the utmost of its Corinthian capabilities, and the hands-on, *This Old House* contingent dotes on the tasteless and sometimes destructive conversions in the program by that name. Everywhere, the urge to preserve the past or merely paste it over the present prevails.

All these elements account for the pull of *House*. And yet beyond them all—beyond the yarnsmanship of the author, the characters' trendiness or the timeworn subject matter; beyond the simultaneous appeals of modernity and antiquity, tradition and fashion—this architectural odyssey spills out of the bookstores, it seems to me, because of one other ingredient: because its subject, the owner-built house, is on its way to extinction. As much as the condor whose grim visage we now like, the house tooled by its owner is a vanishing species.

By any measure, the house is in trouble. Home size is shrinking; prices are rising and renovation often costs more than new construction. Just this winter, word came that the government may pull its support of the sacrosanct form of shelter by ending (or privatizing) Federal Housing Administration-insured mortgages. Six decades after the birth of the F.H.A., the Reagan Administration may close the agency, which has bankrolled 15 million homes, and dismiss the 4,669 people it now employs.

Is it any wonder then that we have become conscious of the plight of the "homeless"? The poor are always with us, and the shelter crisis is all too real. But why else is it that a whole roster of unfortunates—the mentally ill, welfare mothers and their young, the unemployed and the old—are labeled by their lack of affordable housing? Consonant with the dream of the home, the appeals go out for the homeless, ignoring the fact that the powerlessness and poverty of this underclass needs repair far more than it needs envelopment in four walls.

At this level, too, it is relevant that home is more than ever where the heart is—at the center of a search for stability and tradition. And so, again, is *House*. For all the "I'm O.K., you're O.K." carpenters and the postmodern design, this is a book based on the pull of tradition. It is a throwback to a bygone task and a domestic way of nest-building now under assault. As the hearth-centered

staple of loving couple and 2.3 children moves to the statistical margins, *House* brings us housewife Judith Souweine, still the facilitator, still the little woman, and husband Jonathan, the father-knows-best problem-solver.

As we watch the dwindling of single-home design, architect/esthete William Rawn appears as a heroic anachronism. Fretting over pilasters on the temple portion of the house, consulting his muse and defending it to the Luddite carpenters, he is the epitome of the elitist, century-old image of the architect.

In a way, this is not quite fair to the real-life architect Bill Rawn. Rawn, who clearly has no urge to ride this particular hobbyhorse to fame by taking on other private clients, is now at work on more civic jobs in the Boston area. But it is true to the broader stereotype that makes its way into print: the architect trimming capitalist concoctions and dwellings or, as Ada Louise Huxtable has put it, moving chairs on the deck of the *Titanic*.

To its credit, the attention to detail recorded in *House* charts a better approach to the construction of dwellings than the usual gridding of America. Its product is an exception to the look of the New England landscape, where new houses are strewn like McNuggets across the farmlands and condominiums are tricked out like Yankee villages. And yet, in the most basic way, *House* and its house are part of the same problem, a custom-made version of the excess individualism and private self-indulgence of those who cultivate their own garden. *House* may be merely the harmless odyssey of a dream. But its popularity also reflects the deep narcissism of architecture and its consumers today. □

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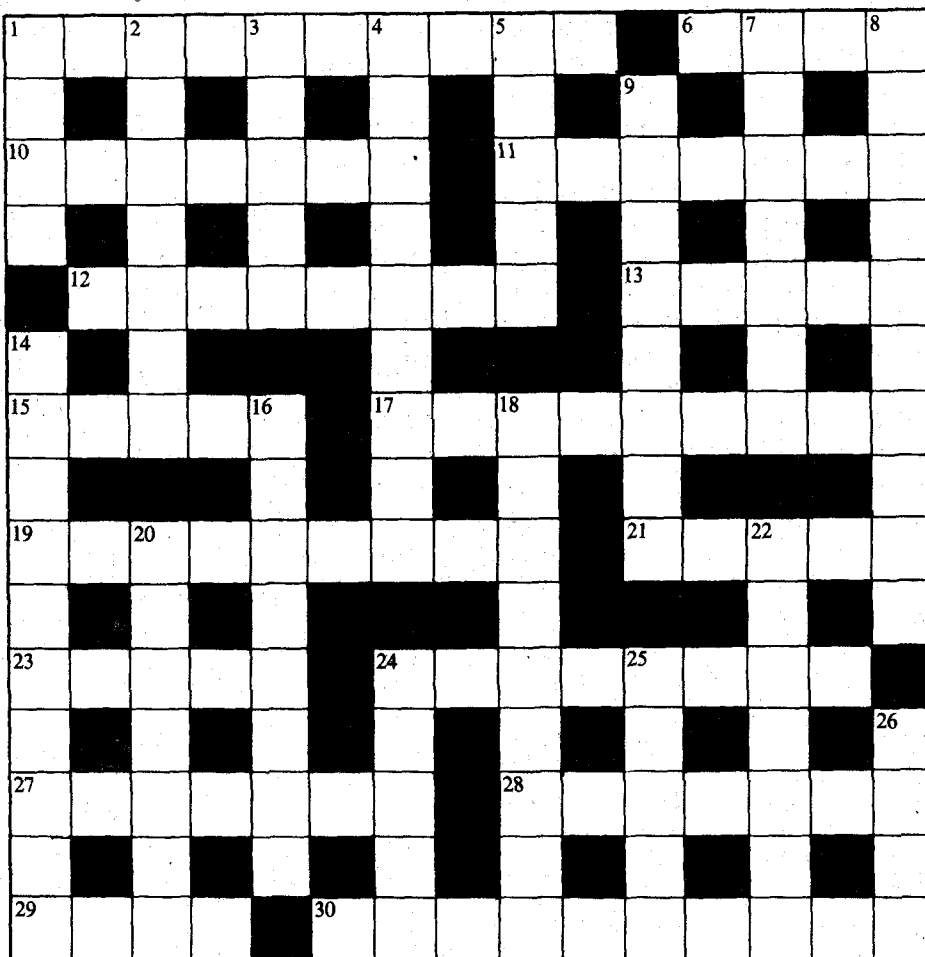
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- 1 and 18 down Hoping past performances may not be memorable? (3,7,2,7)
- 6 Go before the wind makes what cows chew tail first. (4)
- 10 Is amatory pastime so much, according to the French? (One will help you get your bearings.) (7)
- 11 What the sailor used to drink when about to beat someone, associated with pains of childhood. (7)
- 12 Certainly not an amateur to get back with a couple of failing marks, but such a female might be encouraged. (8)
- 13 Use foil if you want to handle hot stuff! (5)
- 15 Verses on an old place of entertainment? (5)
- 17 Be in bad with the air controllers in a sense—they have a familiar ring, with more than one stage. (9)
- 19 Craft center, perhaps. (5,4)
- 21 Philosopher, possibly associated with the breakfast table. (5)
- 23 The shade found in aluminum, brass, etc. (5)
- 24 Rather large with a mouse like the three blind ones eventually—implying the second mate is unrecognizable. (9)
- 27 Blades associated with numbers, perhaps. (7)
- 28 You might get fully in, perhaps, and still find a way to make things ineffectual. (7)
- 29 In the mysterious East, having too much might do it to you. (4)
- 30 Is the sick actor radically so? How unfortunate! (3-7)

DOWN

- 1 Might it be a sticking point for the shoemaker? (4)
- 2 Scot would be missing, in the old sense—one might find such things at airports. (3-4)
- 3 People sometimes hope to get a rise out of such. (5)
- 4 A long coat might be tailored so, but there's certainly more than one side to it. (9)
- 5 Quite a bit below par, according to the American standard. (5)
- 7 Head back for one, artificially? (Notching is wrong, but not square). (7)
- 8 The soldier comes up in what might be bandages—which is getting away from the point. (10)
- 9 Where one might boast about a 5, or perhaps spoon. (4,4)
- 14 Important people might need them nowadays—something like fenders for your car. (10)
- 16 Shells—or just crazy people? (3,5)
- 18 See 1 across
- 20 A taxi I catch, perhaps, though it might be intended for important government officials. (7)
- 22 One might be swift, and has appointed rounds, according to what's on the Post Office building. (7)
- 24 Bails out in the kitchen, if one is a good cook. (5)
- 25 Was she the toast of the opera? (5)
- 26 Cyclops was one. (4)

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